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A POSSIBLE-WORLD SEMANTICS APPROACH TO WORLD STRUCTURES AND NARRATIVE TRANSMISSION IN THE FANTASTIC TALE

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Possible-World Semantics Approach to World Structures and Narrative Transmission in the Fantastic Tale" submitted by May Charles in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

By applying the theoretical principles of possible-world semantics to selected Romantic fantastic tales by Hoffmann (Der goldene Topf, Der Sandmann, and Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht), Gogol (The Nose and The Portrait), and Nodier (La Fée aux miettes), a triangular relationship is distinguished between narrative world ontology, narration, and reader reaction. An analysis of the significant mechanisms of narrative transmission, including various features of fragmentary, ambiguous, and self-destructive narration, reveals an epistemological deficiency generated by the very procedures of fantastic narrative transmission. A range of aspects include authorial reticence, self-contradiction, withdrawal of authentication, ironic attitude, focalization, and modalization. The construction of ontologically hybrid worlds, with ambiguous narrative reality and coalescence/interaction of ontological zones, results from the failure of the narration to authenticate these narrative world structures. Fantastic hesitation can then be re-defined not only as an encoding of permanent narrative ambiguity, resulting from the refusal of the narration to resolve the basic conflict between two ways of understanding story reality, but also in terms of the real reader's predicament. Internal story probability is subjugated to the external rationality of the reader, precisely because of the indeterminate status of story events. The relationship between prime and secondary levels of narrative reality further contributes to the epistemological indeterminacy, by reinforcing the hesitation link between the indecisive narration and the reader. Since the thematized dualisms of the selected tales also provide a necessary pretext for multiple reader conclusions, and suggest a merging of supernatural ontological zones with secondary levels of reality, the authenticity of the hybrid narrative worlds becomes a function of the exposure and treatment of secondary levels of reality. Ontological hesitation is thus generated by epistemological, cognitive procedures--a narrative strategy which results in a dual reader perspective, which cannot be resolved through any routine cognitive procedures of retrieving textual meaning. The main purpose of this study is to define this narrative process through a descriptive, explicative approach. The confrontation of possible-world semantics with the selected fantastic tales results in a useful correlation between forms of content and forms of expression.

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Chapter One: Possible-World Semantics and the Study of the Fantastic

Most people in our culture would agree that supernatural literary narrative worlds are alternate to the natural world of experience, with the possible exception of specifically religious content. To say that the description in a fantastic text creates and constitutes what it describes is not innovative--the supernatural is not generally presumed to exist otherwise. It is a "reality" constituted in language, and is consequently ideal for the study of "possible worlds." But such is not my purpose in invoking the powers of possible-world semantics. My aim is to look at the nature of the text which describes fantastic events, and not only to question the ontological implications of those events as such.

It is generally acknowledged in contemporary poetics since the studies of Caillois and Todorov that the reaction of hesitation characterizes the fantastic genre; that is, that the reader hesitates between a natural and supernatural explanation of story events; and, that fantastic narrative is highly complex compared with the marvellous or the uncanny. Yet the actual events which produce the reaction are not different from those of the marvellous. The real difference is found within the narration itself, which influences perception. The purpose of this study is to define the narrative process which encourages the hesitation, not in terms of minute stylistic factors, but by analysing the main narrative mechanisms which create world structures. In this way, the structures of worlds found in the selected stories can be correlated with a description of the narrative transmission; the forms of content can be related to the forms of expression.

Possible-world semantics provides a way to answer basic questions about how narrative worlds are produced, and about the status of ontological zones and levels of reality within those worlds. By meta-reading we can establish the methods of fantastic narrative, and understand the treatment of those imaginary worlds in terms of sets of semantic operations which dictate meanings within the texts. It is only signs which can create a literary fictional world, including the particular component of the supernatural within that world. Because of the representational force of narrative language, words are ultimately transcended to reach the imaginary world which has been constructed by those words. By taking a descriptive explicative approach, and using the terms and distinctions established in possible-world semantics, it is possible to concentrate on what is specific to fantastic narration, and in fact define the treatment of imaginary worlds within the genre, in terms of narrative transmission. The acknowledged effect of reader hesitation, which is based on pre-theoretical intuitions about dual worlds, can be understood in terms of the actual semantics of the texts. Before pursuing this useful and natural progression to possible-world semantic theory in terms of the analysis of certain stories by Hoffmann, Gogol, and Nodier, it will be necessary to establish the general context of the theory, which will lead to an introductory discussion of those aspects most useful in the analysis of fantastic narrative.

What is a "possible-world"

The concept of "possible world" is now loosely equated with "imaginary situation," although even the term "actual" presupposes "possible." The modal logic of possible-world semantics concerns itself with all logically possible worlds; for example, possible worlds constructed by conditional or counterfactual statements. Possible worlds exist as alternatives to the actual world, as pure logical constructs. The semantics of alethic modalities, those concerned with the possible, impossible, and necessary, can be interpreted in terms of alternative possible worlds,[1] with obvious implications for exciting narrative theory.

The term "world" has long been used as an ontological metaphor for fiction, and the expression "possible world" evokes undeniably attractive connotations for an unrestrictive theory of fiction. In fact, the theory of possible-world semantics can be put to work to explain the semantic properties of narrative texts--properties which enable the construction of fictional worlds. As an internal theory of fiction, possible-world semantics can focus on a discussion of possible non-actual worlds in literature, and actually define fictionality by examining the meaning and truth status of fictional statements. Literary semantics looks at literature as a source of meanings, which need not be assigned from an external point of view, but which may be thought of as "macro-structures of meaning" inherent within texts.[2] Possible-world semantics provides a way of explaining what has been done in narrative, without implying authorial intention. It constitutes a theoretical procedure, a set of heuristic tools, and a unified framework for looking at familiar aspects of narrative. Using this theoretical frame, content can be dealt with in a systematic way, comparable to the studies of form which have proven so useful. By dealing with content from the inside of narrative texts, instead of from an external, interpretive position, narrative semantics permits the study of content expressed in form, and organized by form.

Literary texts are in fact semiotic systems which construct possible worlds; or alternately, fictional worlds are semiotic systems constructed by signifying acts. All worlds are constructed from symbols, or words. Any human depiction is a world-making operation. Every work of literature defines or projects, by means of symbols, a non-actual world. World versions are made to exist only through a symbolic means of construction. Lubomír Doležel repeatedly refers to worlds as being "called into existence" through a symbolic system--otherwise there is only blank paper or empty canvas! If we prefer, we can think of writers as unmaking and re-making familiar world versions, which are re-cast in recognizable ways, but always through symbolic means. The very history of fiction can be traced, in terms of the particular means employed and detectable in various styles, and also semantically by means of the types of world created by different authors, and in different genres and periods.

If literary texts are thought of as creating their own worlds, and not merely describing or detailing a world already existent, worlds are not referred to in a mimetic sense, but constructed. They are manifest in the texts--constituted in the discourse and its reading. The worlds of stories contain fictional "facts" which do not pre-exist the narration, but are brought into being through it. Possible worlds are stipulated by the descriptive apparatus employed within an intellectual construction.

The premise that literary texts construct worlds through poetic procedures provides a justification for the entire study of fictional semantics, which is ~~really~~ the essential link between the narrative text as such, and the fictional world created.[3] Within diverse narratives there are an unlimited number of possibilities for the creation of worlds, depending on the rules observed, which dictate the arrangement of the elements available. Possible worlds are constructed according to global principles: their assembly is not random but organized, based on adopted textual restrictions.[4]

For Doležel, narrative worlds thus have special ontological status. They are determined by the textual description, and are both a product of the text and the basis of its meaning. They are autonomous semiotic entities, which are not dependent on the actual world, even though related to it or parallel with it. They need not conform to the principles of the actual world.[5] But while the coherence, causality, and backgrounds of fictional worlds may well be different from the way things work in the actual world, there will always be some degree of conceptual reader dependence on the factors and features which we regard as actual in the real world.

Before launching into more concrete semantic considerations of material aspects of fictional worlds, which relate in particular to fantastic narrative, it will be helpful to establish some of the theoretical semantic considerations of formal aspects which are basic to possible-world semantics.

Truth, reference, and modality in possible worlds

Within a formal mode of discussion, a work of literature is a series of propositions which define a possible world. Without the propositions no world can exist. Propositions are formulated to describe a state of affairs. Truth becomes a function from propositions to possible worlds, and the notion of truth in a world becomes operative. A set of "true" propositions describes the state of affairs within a possible world, and hence defines that world. Conversely, possible worlds are the places where propositions become true. Within this theoretical framework, we can differentiate between true and false propositions: those which accurately describe the state of affairs are true. Because we do not consider propositions as corresponding to an actual state of affairs, we no longer need to categorize them all together, or to look for reference to the real world.

A possible world thus equals an imagined state of affairs where a set of propositions is satisfied, or is expressed by a set of relevant propositions. Each world is characterized by a particular state of affairs which includes a set of individuals (what we can refer to) and their properties (what we can say about them), relations, and rules and regularities. Individuals which embody a state of affairs are part of that domain, and "exist" in that context. There is no limitation on what may be the state of affairs, and any combination of factors may be changed between states of affairs, which are changed by means of happenings or actions which the agents are capable of performing. A series of happenings or actions constitutes a possible course of events. Narrative then becomes a succession of states of affairs, which include all relevant propositions with a capacity for change in truth value.

When we say that a proposition is true if the fact which it denotes is true in some possible world, we realize that every statement is true or false in a given world, with respect to a frame of reference or system of description. What may be true in the socially accepted or standard version of the real world is of no direct consequence in fiction, because there can be no truth by reference in a fictional world, where the very structure of that world is an intensional object. Since the signs used in literature refer to possible non-actual worlds, and specifically construct these worlds, they can only "refer" to those worlds constructed, and not to any "real" world. Thus the criterion of truth and existence is relative to the imaginary worlds in question. The very notion of truth will depend on the world where applied, and the same proposition may change its truth value depending on which world it is related to. Truth in fiction can only be judged according to inner compatibility, not by correspondence to the actual world. Obviously all truth in narrative will depend on the authentication procedures employed within the discourse, and it is necessary to integrate the philosophical problems of truth into an understanding of how meaning is produced and understood in narrative texts.

Narrative semantics is the study of narrative structures--the organization of a sequence of narrated events into a coherent story. Narrative modalities determine what the narrative potential of a fictional world will be--what kind of actions will be possible. Only within certain norms can certain story structures be generated. Anchoring his study in the abstract models of logical modalities, Doležel has evolved an understanding of narrative modalities as "...global restrictions imposed on the possible courses of narrated actions..."[6] A modal system of constraints defines the fictional world, where some potential narrated actions could never be admissible. As semantic concepts, modalities are related closely to story actions, and can constitute global constraints controlling a whole sequence of actions. Just as human beings act and interact within a modal system of constraints, so any sequence of narrated actions is also structured under the control of narrative modalities. The way a story coheres and progresses depends on the one (or more) modal system(s) in control.[7] Doležel has identified four modal systems with application in literary narrative: alethic, deontic, axiological, and epistemic.[8]

Types of possible worlds: the alethic dimension

Only the alethic type of world is of particular interest to this study, precisely because it deals with questions of existence--what is possible, impossible, and necessary. The alethic world permits a distinction between the natural and supernatural, as found in the fantastic genre. The modalities of nature control the natural domain, in terms of what is possible, impossible, and necessary, including natural events and the activities of agents. In the supernatural domain, the rules of nature are invalid: in principle, everything is possible, although in individual literary works limitations are always imposed. "The redistribution of alethic modalities constructs the supernatural world and, at the same time, describes its relationship to the natural world: the former is a modal transform of the latter."[9] In this way, fictional worlds may be impossible possible worlds--impossible with regard to the actual world and "...with respect to the very conception of what is compossible drawn from the logic with which we speak of the actual world."[10]

The question of distance between the actual world and the frame of reference of the imagined world becomes central to semantic enquiry. Difference can be measured, because a frame of reference must be constructed by the reader to match the fiction, and this can be a more or less laborious operation. A text's frame of reference involves the state of affairs of the possible world, determined by the modalities discussed, and something which Thomas Pavel calls the "general quality" of that world. Radical differences from the actual world will necessitate more reader effort, and even elaborate pretending.[11] Greater historical or cultural distance necessitates more extensive reader effort. Fantastic tales _always_ require considerable reader adjustments, if the content is to be truly assimilated. Fantastic texts are not "friendly" in Pavel's terms: they do not assist their readers to orient themselves within the fictional world. The familiar styles of most fantastic tales do not _seem_ to maximize distance between the imagined and the actual world, yet these styles do not encourage reader acceptance of the states of affairs presented. Instead they are sometimes even provocative, and help to promote ambiguity and confusion. Fantastic texts create puzzles, advance inadequate hypotheses, and encourage perplexity and hesitation. The very nature of the imaginary world is never fully defined in fantastic literature, because the narrator is never quite sure of his ability to make sense of the events witnessed or recounted! While the most remote or strange situations seem to be intimately disclosed, what seems familiar can become suddenly alien and beyond routine comprehension.

Within such a destabilized world, actual _consistency and coherence_ may be minimal. Even outright contradiction may be present in any fictional possible world, and may render a world "impossible" or erratic.[12] Certainly the routine reader commitment to coherence will not help us to read fantastic literature. According to Maitre, coherence is internal to the fictional world, although not entirely independent of external actual world coherence criteria. There are different coherence criteria for each genre, and the criteria will be acceptable to the reader in correspondence with expectations for a particular genre.[13] In literary texts, individual objects and events seem to have cause and effect relationships (as in the real world)--predictable interaction is anticipated, on the basis of what has been established in the text. But it is not required that the necessity of the actual world be in force--laws of nature are easily replaced by a text's own inner coherence and plausibility.[14] In the final analysis, a fictional possible world may well be ambiguous and incoherent, or even logically incompatible--that may be its nature. The very structures of worlds within a work may be incompatible, so that the typical tension of the fantastic tale can be created.

These considerations of formal aspects of fictional possible worlds have led to the formulation of various categorical typologies, which involve descriptive semantic considerations. Valid distinctions have been made by considering differences between the states of affairs in place, different governing modalities, and differences in the manner of presentation of narratives. Without detailing the findings of these studies, we can now examine some of the theoretical semantic considerations of material aspects of possible worlds which form the very basis of such enquiry: ontological perspective and zones, and levels of reality in terms of primary and secondary narrative worlds.

Every work of literature has a certain ontological perspective. A mode of being or ontological status is represented, which is more or less different from that of the real world. Some fictional systems do not conform to the routine laws of real life, but instead establish their own internal system of reality quite separate from what we may consider to be routine, everyday, or "probable" experience. By looking at the nature of individuals and their worlds, we can account for the properties of fictional worlds, including their complexities, and their "laws" of possibility and necessity. Ontology concerns itself with the basic properties, relationships, and structures of a world, including the objects within that world. The ontological perspective equals the set of propositions considered either true or possible in a world, whether actual or imaginary. Society assumes a dominant ontological perspective for the real world, but to define a fictional ontology it is not necessary to consider the actual world as prime in ontological terms. Literary worlds define their own ontological perspectives--are autonomous, so that _intrinsic_ laws of possibility and necessity can be considered, without reference to the contrasting laws assumed to operate in the real world. Ontological perspectives are different for different kinds of literature, and the specific perspectives of any work can be explored. The notion of what is actual, possible, probable, and necessary is relative to the ontological perspective of a possible world, and will vary with the genre. The world of any work can be defined according to these aspects, so that traditional literary genres can be re-defined on a macro-semantic level of overall meaning, according to the type of possible world projected. Correlations can be seen between kinds of possible worlds and types of texts. Certainly fantastic narrative lends itself well to such considerations, because it is possible to detail the world structures which result from dual ontological perspectives.

Some literary works contain _ontological layers or zones_, which can be distinguished in terms of possibilities for action, and access or intrusion between the zones within a heterogeneous world structure. We can distinguish between monolevel and multilevel ontologies. We have seen that a world is defined by its individuals, their properties and actions--an entire state of affairs. In some narrative worlds, the entities are all of one kind, whereas in other worlds they may belong to more than one sphere; for example, the secular and the sacred, or the natural and the supernatural. It is possible to define both what zones are present (in terms of their properties and rules), and what the access between these zones is.

Doležel has provided detailed analyses of different combinations possible within narrative domains. Homogeneous worlds are either entirely natural or supernatural. Dual worlds include both natural and supernatural elements in various combinations, separated by a boundary between the two domains (the standard mythological world, with its limited access between spheres).[15] If a narrative world consists of both a natural and a supernatural component, we consider it to be a double alethic world, which involves the redistribution of alethic modalities. What we consider "naturally" impossible becomes possible within the supernatural context.[16] Both the natural and supernatural domains remain fully authentic, each acceptable by the reader on its own merits. In hybrid worlds, the boundary between the domains is removed, and modal opposition (restrictions on what can "happen") is neutralized between the natural and supernatural, which co-exist and intermingle.[17] Supernatural phenomena appear in the natural world, so that precise distinctions become difficult. In the fantastic tale, which I prefer to consider as a hybrid world, rather than merely as an ambiguous dual world, some opposition between the natural and supernatural is preserved, but the boundaries become uncertain and the authentication of each domain falters. There are two worlds--two entirely different ontological perspectives--but the extent of each frame of reference can never be precisely established. A second system of reality is visible, yet never fully definable.

Some stories labelled as "fantastic" work on a principle of ascribing a seemingly authentic status to supernatural elements within a definite two-level ontology, only to explain everything in natural terms (dreams, hallucination, madness, etc.) at or near the end. This may take the form of the withholding of information for a final revelation which will clarify the phenomena conclusively, or complete disauthentication by an authoritative narrator. The most interesting fantastic tales maintain both the natural and supernatural elements in an uncertain, indeterminate status. In works where there is an oscillation between "could-be-actual" worlds and "could-never-be-actual" worlds,[18] no ontological category can dominate without ambiguity and confusion. Sharp changes in explanation can occur, or there can be a basic narrative hesitation between naturalistic and supernatural explanations. When physically impossible events occur--events not possible in any actual world--there are serious implications for both the story characters and the readers. An uncertainty as to how to understand events constitutes the ontological hesitation recognized as characteristic of the fantastic genre. Sometimes it is impossible to decide whether the fictional world is even physically possible.[19] There can be many "interpretations" advanced. In the process of reading it becomes necessary to adopt different modes of explanation, since the states of affairs are impossible (or are they?) in the type of world "usually" presumed, and suggested as valid by part of the narrative. A hesitation as to how to proceed to understand is unavoidable. Expectations become altered while reading, but if a naturalistic explanation remains possible the problem of ambiguity arises. Here the reader's own beliefs and attitudes will become involved, as choices are made. He will, for example, be more or less willing to accept the supernatural.

Since, as we have seen, a possible world is described through a set of propositions, a problem surfaces if a story proposition can change its truth value depending on which imaginary world it relates to. If it relates to two ontological zones in two different ways, ambiguity results. The natural zone excludes the possibility of the proposition being true, except perhaps as explained by dreams or madness. If we project or "realize" a second zone where the propositions can be true--a supernatural sphere--we overlap possible worlds and accept a shifting ontological perspective. Events can "exist" in different ways--as dreams or madness or drunkenness or within another realm which is not part of the natural domain. Marie-Laure Ryan has formulated this problem in interesting terms--in fantastic narrative, the events of what would seem to be the "actual" narrative world are pitted against the "...character's (and reader's) representation of the general laws governing reality." To resolve this epistemic conflict, either the "impossible" facts must be sacrificed, or the knowledge-world of the character and reader. "In [the latter] case the character modifies his representation of general laws so as to integrate the controversial facts into the real world, in the [former] he expels these facts from reality by consigning them to the alternate world of a dream or hallucination."[20] Where there is such choice, many questions are not assigned answers. A "decision" becomes problematic because more than one explanation can organize the events in plausible or coherent ways, depending on the mode of being assumed to be in effect. In the most "difficult" fantastic works, the reader may have to settle for permanent hesitation and uncertainty. To force any unequivocal explanation would be to violate the spirit of instability inherent in the fantastic work.

Levels of reality: the dual structure of narrative

The ontological complexity of fiction in general, and the fantastic genre in particular, is not limited to the structuring of ontological perspectives into layers or zones. The question of levels of reality must also be considered in terms of an opposition between a prime narrative "reality" and those of the characters within a story. In any narrative, there is a basic level of reality established, in which some propositions are true and some are false. As we have seen, we can distinguish truth because those propositions not true do not describe part of that world. What the reader comes to view as the "real world" of the narrative is comprised of manifestations: the current state of affairs, relevant and revealed previous states of affairs, and the apparent "laws" which serve to limit what any future state of affairs may become. In Ryan's terms, there is a factual domain, or an actualizable domain for the future. This world is "natural" for the characters, and is (at least in traditional fiction) authenticated by the narrator. This "actual" world is regarded as real by the characters, who relate to it in the same way as we relate to our reality. The reader sees and expects this process. The author deliberately makes this world secure and "real," assigning it a privileged status.[21] The basic reality of a traditional narrative is constructed to be "true"--otherwise the routine process of story-telling is subverted and standard reader expectations denied, as in all "unreliable" narration, and in particular in fantastic and postmodern texts. Even though the basic story reality is a mere creation of the author's mind, we read it as autonomous and true. The potential lack of authentication of basic narrative reality will be discussed at length as a central concern of this study, but first a look at the nature of the dual structure of narrative will establish the notion of the secondary or "relative" worlds which are especially important in fantastic fiction.

There are, in any narrative, two different degrees of reality: a primary narrative world, defined by the narrator, which has an absolute or autonomous existence, and which constitutes what "really" exists in the imagined world; and, secondary narrative worlds which exist through the mental acts of characters.[22] These secondary levels of reality involve the private worlds of characters, may have a perspective radically different from that of the narrator, and will be more or less distinguishable from what the narrator says. Since the characters are also engaged in creating worlds--building their own modal systems--there can be numerous relative worlds enclosed within the basic or "absolute" narrative world. The reader must link any secondary world to the primary one, through an intellectual process of decoding the correspondence between fictional structures.[23] This process is not without the hazards of possible resultant ambiguity--the typical problems of diverse "interpretation" often stem from the incorporation of narrative events into the wrong level of reality.

The very term "actual" becomes relative, since the characters certainly see their own worlds as actual. Second level realities create a problem of perspective and ontological indeterminacy, as the characters look at "reality" within a fictional world; for example, the characters of fantastic tales may not be able to tell the difference between hallucination and reality. As Ryan points out, the reader has a privileged position over that of the characters, who do not have a complete knowledge of their own "actual" world! They base their knowledge after all on their own "empirical" experience.[24] They create representations of the basic narrative world, or idealized models of that world, or mental worlds which are alternate to the "actual" world of the narrative. Ryan has studied these aspects in detail, and has established a typology of relative worlds: epistemic or knowledge-worlds, which may be incomplete, incorrect, or otherwise incompatible with the basic narrative world; intention-worlds; model-worlds of wishes, moral values, and obligations which represent the narrative universe "as it ought to be"; and, alternate universes, which are mental creations. These pure inventions of the characters--dreams, hallucinations, illusions, fantasies, games of pretense--are all fiction composed by the characters and created through statements counterfactual with reference to the prime narrative reality. These alternate universes become systems in themselves, quite separate from the "actual" world of the fiction.[25] If the narrator does not authenticate these worlds, the reader questions whether the views of the characters are those of the work--in fact, it may become difficult to even know what "happens." The interaction between story "reality" and what is created in the minds of characters can become problematic, since second level fictions can be projected onto the basic story actuality. The precise system of relations between the "actual" narrative world and the relative worlds may be obscure. In looking at fantastic narrative, it will be possible to determine how the borderline between these systems becomes distorted through narrative transmission, with the result that narrative truth can no longer be evaluated.[26]

Possible worlds and the reader

Having outlined some of the semantic considerations of the material aspects of narrative possible worlds, with emphasis on the conditions found in fantastic narrative, it will now be useful to look at the ramifications of these aspects in pragmatic terms. Cognitive strategies of readers can be recognized, with a view to exposing one of the most essential of world-creating procedures: authentication. It will be possible to determine what kind of narrative operations build a fantastic text containing the kinds of aspects that we have already isolated, first of all by establishing the essentials of reader response when confronted with fantastic literature.

Clearly the truth value of a proposition depends on the sources of information found in a text. There are a limited number of explicit propositions which represent a state of affairs, plus implicit meaning which the reader recovers from the semantic structure through inference and "filling in" of textual gaps with the help of generally prevalent beliefs and genre conventions. Unless blocked by the story, interpretation and word-construction through filling of gaps will be routine. Doležel explains that such "implicit" meaning is no less objective than explicit meaning, even though it involves presuppositions and/or inferences, because it is "recovered" from the textual semantics.[27] Secondly, as Félix Martínez-Bonati points out, literary conventions are important to the entire reading process, since literary works always remain within a context of literary traditions and expectations. The narrative-descriptive sentences do not stand alone. There is always an external literary influence on reader reactions which helps to evoke a system of fictional reality.[28] Thirdly, we use reality itself as a basis for understanding fiction--we use what we know about the real world to assess both fictional statements and interpretive statements about fiction. Adjustments are only made if they cannot be avoided. According to a principle of minimal departure, we reason about truth in fiction from a background of well-known facts. Inferences are made as we read fiction against the background of the actual world, as we know it. We hold fixed the features of reality which do not have to be changed--no gratuitous change is presumed.[29] We presume truth, if there is no apparent reason to see something as false. This natural tendency towards the interpretation closest possible to the reality with which we are comfortable--sometimes called "naturalization" in terms of the actual world--is challenged in the "impossible" worlds of fantastic narrative. Reader expectations are a major factor.

Something which radically contradicts the reader's previous knowledge and consequent assumptions becomes difficult to integrate into any set of propositions. We do strive as readers to see worlds as coherent, unified, and even "economically" arranged in terms of objects or entities. We are in fact willing to ignore minor discrepancies, such as textual inconsistencies, in an effort to approach a fictional world. We seek out what seems intelligible. According to Maitre, we sometimes even relegate the impossible elements to the periphery, in order to facilitate the initial sense-making operation required to approach a text on a basic level.[30] Textual indeterminacy makes the naturalization process more difficult. If the possible world refuses to be "naturalized," the reader may reject it outright, or adopt Coleridge's principle of the willing suspension of disbelief, or perhaps re-adjust his own interpretation of what may be possible even in the actual world.[31]

Because coherence is always sought within the sense-making process, when confronted by the incoherence of an "impossible" fictional world, a reader will seek an explanation which renders the text intelligible. Since this is not possible in terms of some linking with known "actual" likelihoods, it may be necessary to allow an explanation which could never be acceptable in the actual world.[32] Even then, extreme implications can be ignored by the reader, particularly if they threaten to render the work nonsensical. The authors of fantastic tales play with this very process, knowing that the built-in textual ambiguity will produce results--possibly increase reader involvement and/or appreciation. There is an element of provocation in fantastic narrative.

A reader expects to use his imagination. While he may not believe in the content of the story, he is willing to temporarily accept statements and to play the "game of make believe," especially if he feels somehow "involved" in the story. But while he is willing to accept illusion, he also expects his imagination to be governed by the structure of the textual world. He normally expects an inner coherence which will facilitate his imaginative involvement in a sequential unfolding process. To what extent do fantastic texts "block" routine reader involvement and reconstruction of an imaginary world? Is an imaginative activity parallel to that of the author demanded of the reader in fantastic texts? How open to explanation is the imaginary subject matter? Reading does involve sequential response. Attempts within the internal narrative structure to deny clarification of basic narrative events can only undermine the reader's ability to "interpret" in a routine, systematic way. Is it possible that we read fantastic literature differently? We may actually anticipate the excessive departures from the expectations of the actual world, in order to make consistent sense out of even the most strange state of affairs. Because a narrative system can be assumed by the reader, only to be overturned by the fantastic turn of events, much more reader effort is required than in more realistic texts.

Possible worlds and modes of narrative transmission

The hesitation which a reader feels when processing a fantastic story is not a personal, self-generated feeling, but is rather created by the mode of presentation of the possible world within the text. It is a text-dependent hesitation, which results directly from textual ambiguity and plurality of meaning. Reader expectations on the basis of narrative assertions also constitute a part of the fictional world. There are a variety of possible worlds posited by the reader as a text progresses, according to logical implications. These worlds are built up with reference to the use of propositions which imply a certain world. What the narration includes and excludes serves to define and limit respectively what the fictional world can be.[33] Reader adjustments and replacements are made according to textual cues, and the encouragement provided by the narration.[34] As Pavel explains, all propositions must be accepted by the reader as true within a possible world, and integrated into the already extant set of propositions, some of which are already known by the reader. This decision to accept must be based on the sense of likelihood that the proposition belongs, and will depend on what authentication is offered.[35] Thus based in narrative-descriptive assertions, the reader's expectations as to what is possible take shape. When something "occurs" which does not seem to belong in the frame of expectations, like a supernatural event, the reader must re-evaluate his assumptions about the imaginary world, and perhaps modify his response on the basis of "current" textual assertions. The nature of these assertions will determine what the reader is able to accept and conclude. If the narration has been matter-of-fact and logical, then introduces an "unusual" proposition, the reader is faced with a dilemma. Does he believe the new "fact" as part of the already established set of propositions which describe the possible world of the text, by "naturalizing" the unusual, or does he realize the emergence of another ontological zone where the proposition will more properly belong? How he responds depends mainly on the authentication provided by the narration--he will be "steered" accordingly. If the narration refuses to provide clear indications, it can be said to hesitate between two possible interpretations. The characters may also hesitate and equivocate, with the result that no final decision becomes possible for the reader. Thus in complex ontologies, where the different zones are regulated by laws incompatible with each other, the reader is prevented from deriving a coherent final meaning through conventional narrative decoding procedures. There is no overall pattern to unify fantastic narrative, which establishes a permanent hesitation between two alternate organizing principles. The ultimate degree of loss of integration occurs in the familiar self-cancelling narrative.

This discussion has demonstrated that the process of recovering meaning from the textual semantics of fantastic narrative is problematic, and is in fact hindered by the ontological layering and levels of reality. The discrepancies among these various worlds result in the recognized hybrid construction, largely because of the lack of authenticity for the account which is produced within the actual narration. The problems which the reader encounters are created by the narrative procedure, and it is these operations of the narration which can be studied within a context of general principles of narration, to develop an understanding of the authentication and disauthentication performed by the narrator of a fantastic tale.

The first factor to consider with regard to the authentication process is the type of narration. It has long been recognized, and recently upheld throughout the studies of Doležel, that third-person, past tense, anonymous narration constitutes the impersonal reporting voice of a narrator who speaks with authority, and whose speech acts constitute the world they represent. This kind of narrator's speech is "true" by definition because it provides the only narrative facts that exist. It creates a world which does not pre-exist, and which must be accepted as true. Certainly if the reader introduces an idea contradictory to this "truth," it will be considered false. Omniscience may lend a more complete authority, although a limited point of view can seem equally convincing if "documented." Shifting points of view undermine authority.

A first-person narrative, on the other hand, can only create a relatively authentic narrative world, where the narrative facts are not absolute. Such narratives are really special belief-worlds of the narrator, radically incomplete because limited to the point of view of a participant, witness, or mediator, without access to the mental processes of the (other) characters. A personal narrator involved in the action does not create automatically a narrative domain, since his declarations cannot be presumed accurate. In fact, the reader is more likely to assume that his world is similar to those of the other characters. The actual speech acts in first-person narrative can generate a greater authentication for the propositions if "proofs" and sources of information are provided. Authority will vary according to the devices used to organize the "facts"--it must be established and justified. Unlike in third-person narratives, authority is not guaranteed by convention. This authority is based in the narrator's privileged knowledge, which is variable from narrative to narrative, and even within one story. Narrative devices limit the extent of knowledge, and identify its sources. If these are missing, the authority will be undermined. Some narrators even refuse to define the limits of their knowledge.

These types of narration can be analysed in fantastic tales in order to determine the resulting semantic authority given the various story components. The convention about the ability of a third-person narrative to create a narrative world reflects a reader understanding of the very notion of authentication authority, which is seen as an expected requirement of narrative, and a basic part of narrative structure. Since these very narrative procedures specify imaginary worlds, they are authoritative of necessity and by convention. Such narrative statements are "true," and the events described become part of the fictive world automatically and unquestionably, as opposed to character statements, which are not definitive.[36] We normally expect a narrator to be "objective" and "tell the truth," and trust less in the words of characters, from whom we expect subjective views. The "classic" narrator is authoritative and reliable--he can be trusted, by literary convention! Thus narrative-descriptive assertions of a "basic" narrator are thought to possess the value of truth, even if they would be absurd in the real world! As part of the fiction, which defines for itself what is possible, absurdity is fully acceptable. We must always remember that we do not speak of "true to life" in fantastic literature. Any statement can be true if it is told in such a way as to be authentic within the text. The wildest statement by a third-person narrator (or a first-person narrator who has assumed authority) could seem perfectly true, unless he proceeds to specifically undercut that truth value. It is the specific properties of the narrator's (or characters') speech acts which determine how the statements are received. From the most objective narration, to the most subjective character speech, it is the precise methods of authentication which will influence truth value and stabilize the relationships between ontological layers and levels of reality. In a standard mythological world, both the natural and supernatural zones seem authentic if they are introduced by a reliable narrator. The descriptions of both worlds maintain the same sense of authority, so that we can conclude that the narrator is reliable and fully authoritative according to narrative convention. But such is not the case in ambiguous fantastic narrative, where objective narrative truth values are lost, and it is only by analysing specific procedures of fantastic narration that an understanding of such narrative worlds can be developed.

We thus see that it is not only the kind of world which fantastic narrative develops, but the manner in which this sort of world is presented, which gives the fantastic genre its special quality. The manner of presentation of the state of affairs has a direct influence on the stability of the fictional world.[37] Narrative descriptive-assertions which are not altered by ambiguity and are not self-contradictory permit a stable world to evolve. Doležel has many references in his studies to the process of authentication. The fictional "facts" created by the narrator bring the story into being and define it, in terms of the authentication observable. Authentication is needed for narrative worlds to be constructed--it literally gives symbols or semiotic objects the status of a fictional existence. It is within the very sense of narrative sentences that we look for authenticity values. Authentication is an intensional function, necessary to the construction of any fictional world. The existence of objects and entities is determined by the way in which they are introduced into the text--by the authentication force.[38] Not only what exists, but its mode of existence is determined by authentication. We know what "happens" through authentication, which explains the existence of fictional worlds. As Doležel repeatedly points out, what exists in fiction is different from what exists in the actual world. It cannot simply be perceived, but rather must be determined by the procedures of world construction. It depends on how an imaginary world is created and the authentication function, because only authenticated elements can represent narrative facts.[39] "As a part of the narrator's utterance, the sentence expressing the authentic motif is subject to the formal, stylistic, semantic, etc. restrictions which determine the texture of the narrator's utterance."[40] Authentic elements are identified by textual features which also distinguish them from non-authentic elements. Narrative facts are literally determined by the form of expression employed to tell them, and become the building blocks of an imaginary world.

It is not difficult to see that the concept of truth depends on the authentication which explains--the "sayso semantics"[41]--since a world is created by "telling" about it. Clearly we have come full circle from our initial discussions about truth in fiction, because the assertion made in a narrative speech act is not true or false according to a state of affairs in the actual world, but must be judged according to our perceptions of the narrator's authority. Truth values are assigned (or not) to the descriptions involved in the world construction on the basis of narrative procedures and the very nature of the narrator. If fictional worlds are created through propositions, both the source of those propositions and the intensional organization of sense will be relevant to any assessment of truth. Because fictional worlds are artificial constructs, where states of affairs only exist through the statements made about them, there can be no "empirical" truth as in the actual world.[42] We have already seen that, in a circular way, the statements are true in a world, and at the same time establish that very world through the construction of propositions true in it! The notion of authentication can replace the concept of truth in accounting for what happens in narrative. According to Doležel, if we evaluate narrative sentences, we can determine the function of a sentence within the narrative world construction; that is, those sentences will be "authentic" which express narrative facts and therefore help to build the imaginary world. Textual regularities are expected. A secondary procedure would involve truth values--sentences must correspond with narrative facts which are part of the narrative world. (Characters' sentences would be subject to this procedure.) Thus "truth" concepts are subordinated to the concept of "authentication." "Fictional truth is strictly 'truth in/of' the constructed narrative world and its criterion is agreement or disagreement with authenticated narrative facts."[43] We can ultimately only determine what is true in narrative on the basis of authenticity values found in the actual words in a text.

To explore then the semantics of fantastic texts will reveal the process of failure to authenticate, contradictory authentication, and/or withdrawal of authentication. We have seen from several points of view in this study that informational elements which represent either states of affairs or events can only be evaluated finally in the course of reading, through a process of textual confirmation or contradiction.[44] All narrative devices consequently serve in the construction of fictional world formations, and are not gratuitous. If narrative information is not made definitive, or is deleted by subsequent narration, the indeterminacy and hesitation of the fantastic genre will be in force. To study this generic situation further with the tools of possible-world semantics will involve an analysis of the basic qualities of fantastic narration, the procedures of fragmentary or ambiguous representation, and the techniques of self-destructive narrative. A range of specific narrative procedures will be exposed in their capacity to undermine authority and produce indeterminacy. The results of the failure to authenticate narrative worlds will be analysed in terms of the relationship between the factors of narrative transmission and the consequent ambiguous world construction, tentative establishment of basic narrative reality, resultant hybrid worlds, and transition between worlds. A "re-definition" of fantastic hesitation results from the study of this relationship. In order to fully understand the textual origins of reader hesitation, it will be necessary to examine the relationship between narrative transmission and levels of reality, with particular attention to character authenticity, the semantic factors involved in the relationship between prime narrative reality and secondary levels of reality, and the lack of mutual narrative support between primary and secondary worlds. By examining the role of thematized dualisms, it will be possible to establish a correlation between the authenticity of hybrid narrative worlds and secondary levels of reality, in terms of the actual mechanisms of a dual reader response. In this way, using a modal theory of narrative, we can deal with the perplexities of fantastic narrative at a basic interpretive level, by analysing the establishment of textual information affecting the way in which the reader can retrieve a (coherent) story from a text. By exposing the semantic indeterminacy, we can look at the narrative strategies of fantastic literature in a new light, and appreciate better how the actual structures of narrative worlds are built, limited, and complicated by narrative expression/transmission.

Chapter Two: Analysis of Narrative Transmission in Selected Fantastic Tales

Three tales by Hoffmann (Der goldene Topf: Ein Märchen aus der neuen Zeit, first published as Der goldne Topf: Ein Mährchen aus der neuen Zeit, Der Sandmann, and Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht), two tales by Gogol, in translation (The Nose [Nos] and The Portrait [Portret], and La Fée aux miettes by Nodier will be analysed in terms of the essential characteristics of the narration, which not only directly influences, but creates the textual meaning. The two versions of both The Nose (Son [A Dream] 1836, and Nos [The Nose] 1842) and The Portrait (1835 and 1842) will be considered, although references will be to the second editions unless otherwise indicated. Standard editions have been used throughout, since they are sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this study. The stories will be treated only as fantastic tales, roughly in accordance with Todorov's criteria. Possible considerations of other qualities which depend on an alternate genre classification will be set aside to facilitate the focus of this study.

Type and basic qualities of narration

The interpretation from the "inside" will start with the basic distinctions of person, tense, point of view, and narrator identity and participation in story. Der goldene Topf, Der Sandmann, The Nose, and The Portrait are all third-person, past tense, technically "anonymous" narratives, told from an essentially omniscient point of view. But only The Portrait adheres entirely to a consistent point of view (only changing perspective within the framed story of the second part) and consequently establishes a relatively "authentic" narrative world. The other stories violate the expected procedures of third-person narrative by fluctuating between fully privileged knowledge and a limited point of view. Even though the narrators "tell" more than would be possible for them to know as mere witnesses, they also interrupt their own narratives to underline the limitations of their knowledge. All of these narrators are extradiegetic, or narrate from a prime narrative level "above" the story.[45] With the exception of the narrator in Der goldene Topf, who becomes involved in the story action in the conclusion (becomes homodiegetic), these narrators are all heterodiegetic and do not participate in the story. The narrator in Der Sandmann does make reference to "knowing" the characters. The narrator in the first-person framed narrative in The Portrait is intradiegetic, narrating from a second level, and is homodiegetic or involved (marginally) in the story told about his father's experiences. The switch to a first-person narrative allows for a more subjective elaboration of the background of the portrait--a story more open to doubt, since it cannot be established as narrative fact in the same way as the rest of the narrative.

This particular narrative differs however from the other first-person narratives to be discussed, because it does not involve any "motivated" story participation, and is consequently more like the anonymous third-person narratives. The narrator is not merely a character or agent who narrates, because he assumes the privileged position of constructing a narrative world, even though his authentication authority is not absolute. He does not justify this authority, but merely adopts that of a third-person anonymous narrator in spite of his limited point of view and reliance on "hearsay" information.

The first-person, retrospective narratives of Die Abenteuer der

Silvester-Nacht and La Fée aux miettes have narrators who are involved in the story action--autodiegetic, as protagonist/narrators. Because these narratives are limited to the point of view of a story participant, they can only create relatively authentic narrative worlds, without absolute authority. The frame narrator in La Fée aux miettes is extradiegetic, while both Michel and the Enthusiast are intradiegetic narrators, telling their stories via a second-level discourse. The further framed story of the lost reflection in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht is then an intra-intradiegetic narrative, told in third-person, past tense by a heterodiegetic narrator with an oddly limited point of view.

The various levels of narration complicate a narrative analysis. Although The Nose, Der goldene Topf, and Der Sandmann all contain only one level of narration, the latter does begin with letters, which constitute a device to make the protagonist's childhood experiences accessible and open to doubt, as in a first-person narrative. The first letter functions like a retrospective flashback story, in which the protagonist performs as in a first-person narrative, his point of view immediately established. The second letter constitutes an opposite perspective. Since there is no external narrator involvement, a very personal and subjective narration results, where no external narrator authentication can be visible. (A "dramatic" effect is also produced because these temporary espistolary narrators do not "know" the eventual outcome of their story, as the external narrator does.) The Portrait is composed of two parts, with the second auction scene taking place after the part-one narrative. This second part frames the first-person account before reverting to the more objective conclusion in the third-person, with its mild disauthentication. Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht has a more complex structure consisting of an "editor's" introduction which serves to shift responsibility one level, the first-person narrative of the Enthusiast, the third-person manuscript of the little brown man, and the postscript of the Enthusiast. The manuscript is very peculiar indeed, because although it is ostensibly written by the little man about himself, it is composed as a third-person narrative. It does remain a very personal and subjective narration, where the narrator is closely identified with the protagonist--knows only *his* thoughts, for example. *La Fée aux miettes* is structured with an author's preface, a framework story (in two stages of introducing the narrator with his companion, then with the addition of the protagonist), the protagonist's framed life story told during the course of one day, and a framework conclusion. The progression of this structure is towards the mysterious, and involves distancing factors. The preface colours the entire narrative through its intrusive, self-referential style, and the frame narrator acts as an intermediary between the "mad" protagonist and the reader. Without the framework, Michel's story would seem like a fairy tale, although told in first-person. In addition to these obvious levels of narration, there are also such internal short narratives as the story of Fée aux Miettes about her "true" identity as Belkiss, and stories told by characters (especially Lindhorst) in *Der goldene Topf*. There are thus even more narrators and perspectives, which constitute further distancing devices.

The implications of these basic facts will become more obvious as the narrations are analysed for various mechanisms. For the moment, it is sufficient to establish that differences in the visibility/participation of the narrator are basic to any discussion of semantic authority. In fact, "dramatized" narrators introduce much more doubt in general than do non-represented narrators, because of the conventions about "objective" narration (which have been detailed in the introductory chapter). The habitual use of the pronoun "I" is in fact typical of the genuine fantastic, because this practice enables the reader to "identify" more closely with the narrator/character. There results a more direct access to the fictional world. Perhaps this explains the propensity in the third-person narratives for frequent intrusions of self-reference which highlight the perceptibility of the role of the narrator--a procedure more conducive to the creation of a fantastic story. The perceptible narrator seems more like the reader--more like an ordinary person exposed to the supernatural. His reactions are likewise more open to suspicion, although like those of the narrator/hero, they will be exemplary for the reader.

The decidedly overt nature of all of the narrators manifests itself not only in the use of the pronoun "I," but in various forms of intrusion and self-reference which constitute an obvious meta-text, increasing the narrator visibility and thereby decreasing narrative authority. The most obvious is perhaps the "encoded reader." Although the reader is not always "named," Gogol, Hoffmann, and Nodier all indulge in direct addresses to the reader, which interrupt the flow of the narrative, often occuring in the middle of an action sequence. The addresses are not limited to "prefaces," occuring, for example, as narrative instance within the framed story in La Fée aux miettes and thereby highlighting the narrator's fallibility. Hoffmann uses direct reader address in Der goldene Topf and Der Sandmann to reduce possible reader opposition to the marvellous aspects of the story, to make a personal appeal to the reader to understand the protagonist's experiences and feelings in terms of the reader's own personal observations, and to reduce his narrator's perceived capacity to tell a coherent story. This kind of information withdrawal, as well as the Romantic irony produced by this technique in Der Sandmann, will be examined subsequently. It is significant that The Portrait includes no "personal" intrusions, and no direct addresses to the reader. The Nose and The Overcoat, with their obtrusive skaz narration, include however a variety of narrative self-reference: belated offering of omitted information about characters, "apology" for verbosity and digression, interruption of the story's progress, general commentary about society, and the final evaluation of the story's "truth." Both Gogol and Hoffmann (in Der Sandmann) make direct reference to the act of writing.

This kind of meta-text can only result from the self-conscious commentary of a "dramatized" narrator. The narrator after all is more or less "responsible" for the structure of the story. Any "extra" information about himself which filters through the conscious, deliberate statements serves to further define the narrator. An image is built up which influences reader perception of the narrator's responsibility and authority. While these effects are more easily accomplished in first-person narrative, the overt stance of the narrators within third-person narratives yield similar results of decreased narrator authority in these fantastic tales.

In addition to the degree of perceptibility of the role of the narrator, the authenticity of a narrative also depends on the perception of the narrator's reliability and/or responsibility. Such qualities are influenced by many factors (which will be analysed at length), but an initial indication is found in the tone of the discourse. Here

The Portrait differs from the other third-person narratives because of a more "realistic" description and commentary, which produces a relatively authentic narrative world, created by seemingly reliable narration. In contrast, The Nose is written in an agitated style which includes chatiness, comic humour, satire, self-deprecation, blatant digressions, colloquial expressions and bookishness. Such a narration destroys any sense of reliability, since its purpose seems to involve concealing what the narrator wants to say. The reader suspects a problematic value scheme. It seems to be an extended joke of some sort, very hard to take seriously as an authentic narrative world.

It is in the first-person narratives where the subjective and personal style of the protagonist/narrators most undermine reliability, and limit the creation of an authentic world. While such is not evident in the second-part frame narrative in The Portrait, because of the limited story involvement of the character/narrator, in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht the enthusiasm and passion of the protagonist/narrator immediately help to establish his own mental instability (which has been signalled by his "editor"), as he describes his own actions. (Since the manuscript is created by an "impossible" character, its validity is always in question in spite of its ostensible third-person narration.) Michel's story in La Fée aux miettes suffers from a similar lack of reliability--he is after all "framed" or labelled as a lunatic, and his story is entirely subjective. Yet it is told in a naturally "open," happy, and pseudo-realistic way, as if Michel is confident in the not-so-obvious truth of his life story. Compared with the sad, sarcastic frame narrator, this protagonist seems very reasonable and lucid! The frame narrator's vivacious whims, verbosity, and "poetic" spirit do little to enhance his own reliability.

The introduction of "proofs" or sources of information could stabilize the narrative worlds, since authority depends also on the manner in which narrative facts are organized and presented. But the frame narrator in La Fée aux miettes has no access to "extra" knowledge or sources of information. The other first-person narratives suffer a similar lack, except for the framed story in The Portrait, which is based on a sort of "handed-down" public knowledge, as well as that of the father's experience. These sources are indicated and identified in a convincing, reliable way. While knowledge is limited, it is well-defined and not withdrawn. The third-person narratives do not require "proofs" since they assume a conventional authority, but in Der goldene Topf and The Nose in particular, the narrative facts are not organized so as to establish authority or justify any statements. (Gogol's narrators frequently do not "bother to enquire" for information to add to their accounts.)[46] There is a question of subjective, unreliable sources which then influence hypotheses or illusion. The narrators never define the extent of their own knowledge, and authority is thus undermined. In Der goldene Topf, the narrator seems to be almost a kind of witness, although he is omniscient. The same problems are visible in Der Sandmann, except that the narrator is more clearly involved in the lives of the characters. He "knows" the characters--refers to Clara's smiles for him, and that the letters are communicated by his friend Lothar. There is consequently at least a pretence of "reality" for the story offered by the discourse, and the narrator can seem more knowledgeable about the characters' natures--that of Clara in particular--which reduces doubt and helps to clarify story events.

Fragmentary/ambiguous narrative representation

The question of provision of sources of information leads to a broader problem of self-limitation of narrator knowledge. Certainly the desire to know is at the basis of all interesting narrative--we keep reading to discover what happens. But this process is frustrated in fantastic narrative, where there is no attempt to overcome the sense of incompleteness inherent in fiction. In fact, the Romantics did not hesitate to highlight or maximize the incompleteness of fictional worlds, which were seen to correspond to aspects of life outside of fiction. No attempt will be made in this study to distinguish between ambiguity caused by authorial error or lack of skill, and that which is deliberate --the former (if present) will be ignored as irrelevant.

Narrator knowledge in The Nose and The Overcoat is intermittent, withdrawn at will. While a "right to intermittent knowledge" has long been acknowledged in narrative theory, the shifting point of view of Gogol's narrators is particularly alarming, and helps to create a fragmentary, ambiguous world which is open to doubt, and is ultimately self-destructive. The peculiar narratorial attitude is sometimes authoritative, sometimes doubtful, sometimes referring to sources, sometimes referring to its own inadequacy. There is an incongruous mixture of precise details and denied information--the details are often irrelevant to the story, and the missing information crucial! In The Overcoat, the otherwise omniscient narrator suddenly pleads ignorance of his protagonist's thoughts, saying "Though possibly he did not even think of that; there is no creeping into a man's soul and finding out all that he thinks."[47] But this statement contradicts precisely what he has been doing all along! The narrator thereby undermines his own narrative procedure and encourages reader doubt about his authority.

While not as drastic, similar procedures are present in Hoffmann's stories. The Enthusiast presumes that the manuscript is the story of the little brown man--he does not know. In Der Sandmann, the narrator's knowledge is suddenly limited in the final paragraph, when he makes a tentative statement about Clara's "future" which is not in keeping with the omniscience generally established in the discourse. ("Nach mehreren Jahren will man in einer entfernten Gegend Clara gesehen haben..."[48]) Der goldene Topf contains a radical shift to a limited point of view near the ending, when the narrator admits his inability to proceed with the story, which in fact cannot be completed without apparently supernatural assistance. Wolterstorff speaks about a "knowledge/ignorance contour"[49] which depends on such factors as point of view and access to information. The claims to ignorance typical of the fantastic genre radically alter such a "contour."

The most obvious result of this self-limitation of narrator knowledge is the radical discontinuity and fragmentary structure of both Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht and The Nose. In the former, all information is fragmented within a loose structure dependent on a fragmentary representation, and broken plot. Charles Passage claims that the withholding of information in The Nose is a parody of this structure.[50] In any case, there are two serious and arbitrary breaks in the story's progress: the barber's story is never logically linked with that of Kovaliov, and the general public's interested reaction is suddenly broken off on a whim: "After this...but here again the whole adventure is lost in fog, and what happened afterward is absolutely unknown."[51] The narrator simply refuses to tell what he must "know," so that the denial of information results in a disjointed progression of the narrative.

In general, the withholding of information, or what Chanady calls authorial reticence "...creates suspense, uncertainty, and greater reader participation and acceptance of the contradictions in the text."[52] The lack of explanation of supernatural events arouses more interest, and supports the basic contradiction dominant in the narrative by intensifying reader uneasiness. The withdrawal of information, especially of mental access, heightens the emphasis on the irrational and the ambiguity of what "happens." Suggestive persuasion works! Only intimated, the supernatural is more provocative than if completely detailed. During a direct address to the reader in Der goldene Topf, an entire world is projected, counterfactual to the story as told, in order to involve the reader's imagination in a scene otherwise too marvellous to paint (Veronika and the witch on equinox night). In the conclusion, there is a tantalizing reference to an extraordinary way in which the narrator has discovered the fate of Anselmus, but which he will not disclose.

A general lack of guiding commentary is even more obvious in these narrations. "Clues" are always somehow insufficient. In Der goldene Topf, it is not possible to identify much specific information withheld, yet there is a general quality of the narration which does not provide sufficient guidance for the interpretation and ontological categorization of events. The ever-present plea for the reader's imagination, which is needed to understand the protagonist's situation, deflects attention from this basic deficiency. For example, the suggestion that the reader could only have had Anselmus' "bottled up" experience in a dream does not clarify what has really happened. The narration in Der Sandmann provides marginally more implicit guidance, but no final decision as to the status of the supernatural. In Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, no guidance is offered by the personal, subjective narrations of either the Enthusiast's story or the manuscript--no narrative reality is clarified by the textual clues.

In The Nose, the narrator simply refuses to provide any guidance for the understanding of story events, so that no narrative reality can be established. The reader is often left entirely with the character's point of view and limited knowledge, as in the other stories. For example, the narrator does not clarify Kovaliov's situation--he simply does not propose any explanation, as if none is required! The narration is entirely matter-of-fact without relevant comment or establishment of doubt, until the conclusion. There the narrator distances himself from the story, and offers tentative evaluations of its truth or possibility, which do not seem to be mutually compatible.

The Portrait is quite different. While there is no guidance offered explicitly for the interpretation of story events, a basic narrative reality does emerge. Like in Der goldene Topf, a certain quality of narration discourages categorical interpretations, yet the unanswered questions do not have the same radical impact. If a question remains as to the status of the supernatural events, it is not because of any drastic limitation of knowledge, but more because of a simple failure to comment on the "truth" of those supernatural events. The information provided by the auction scene is of course "withheld" until after Chartkov's death. The story simply works better this way, with the main protagonist's fate left open to its own individual development. In effect, the entire second part becomes a commentary on the events of the first narrative. The frequent general commentary about society does not authenticate any narrative facts, but does imply a more reliable, "standard" narrator, whom the reader is more willing to trust.

Such general comments in La Fée aux miettes serve only to highlight the framework narrator's somewhat "exotic" nature. No guidance is possible within the framed story--the short interruptions never serve to qualify statements, make comment, or otherwise authenticate. By allowing Michel to tell his own story, the limited point of view is maintained, which does not permit a more external knowledge or clarification. Subjectivity and ambiguity are thus enhanced, and narrative reality is indeterminate. No guidance is offered within the framework which is sufficient to categorize ontologically Michel's experiences. Any information sought remains inadequate, and the "sequel" book is lost, with the result that there can be no "future" authentication of story events.

Clearly focalization through characters complicates the entire narrative representation and further increases confusion and ambiguity, largely because no extra explanations are offered to correct what appears to happen as the protagonists "see" events. Since focalization is one of several factors which relate specifically to the relationship between prime narrative reality and secondary worlds of characters, it will be examined within that context in Chapter Four, along with modalization and other aspects of the correspondence between character speech and narrative statements.

Self-destructive narrative

Beyond the purely fragmentary and ambiguous, elements of self-contradiction and inconsistency serve to undermine the authority of fantastic narration. First-person narratives most typically introduce hypotheses or guesses, since the narrator is personalized as a character.

Yet in The Nose, there is no active support of narrative statements, which must be called into question by any sensible reader. Since the narrator is not visibly objective (because of the tone of ambiguity already discussed), he does not provide any clear "truth," and thus deprives himself of authority. Furthermore, the narrator contradicts himself outright, so that no true statements emerge, as would be expected in a more "realistic" third-person narrative. The separated nose is both a gentleman parading about independently who can be "caught," and an object found by the barber and later returned by the police--a bizarre incongruity of narrative facts. How can the policeman apprehend the nose as a civil councillor, then return it by carrying it in his pocket? Such incongruity destabilizes the narrative world. The two "facts" may be fully acceptable independently in a fantastic tale, but their juxtaposition provokes reader perplexity and an insurmountable sense of story contradiction based on a deceiving use of language. The implications are of a story reality which includes the most unnatural events, yet the precise nature of these events is never defined.

Clearly the other stories do not contain the same kind of blatant self-contradiction, but there is nonetheless the kind of contradictory implications, generated by the narrative sentences, which Martínez-Bonati discusses.[53] Stability is retroactively revoked by new implications which do not fit the established ontology, so that the reader's inferences become erratic. Particularly in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, the contradictory implications necessarily exclude and invalidate each other, because any natural explanation renders the account false as presented by the narrators. In Der Sandmann, there is less mutual exclusion of possibilities, since the protagonist is definitely mad--only the causes remain uncertain. The implications of Michel's story in La Fée aux miettes are all self-contradictory, and since the framework narration makes no attempt to categorize, the reader is left with an unstable narrative world.

In addition to inconsistency, re-evaluations and disauthentications can occur in any narrative. A reliable narrator can always re-think and alter what he has told, without usually upsetting his narratees. But the narrators of these fantastic tales are not reliable--what information they provide is not absolute or authoritative in the first place. The first version of The Nose employs a fantastic-uncanny structure to provide a subsequent "natural" explanation for Kovaliov's predicament--it was all merely a dream.[54] The "authentic" supernatural becomes a part of the natural world. The printed version of 1842 merely casts doubts retrospectively, and destabilizes the narrative world, without offering a "natural" explanation. Neither ontological zone is fully (dis)authenticated. The narrator simply admits the improbability of the entire story, calling into question whether the events really happened or even could happen. He isolates the strangeness not only of such an event, but also of the attitude which the characters adopt. Like the readers, he does not "understand" the bizarre incongruities of the nose's independent existence. There will be no explanations, since the narrator claims through re-evaluation to be confused himself. The very authority which has created the story as we must accept it raises doubts as to whether there can be any truth in it!

The Portrait includes a different kind of re-evaluation, since the "dreams" episode of the first narrative comes to be seen in terms of similar events which had previously occurred. (This constitutes a kind of authentication which had been previously withheld.) The final "group doubt" expressed by the narrator on behalf of the listeners at the auction also amounts to a re-evaluation. "And for a long time those who were present were bewildered, wondering whether they had really seen those remarkable eyes or whether it was merely a dream which had flashed before their eyes, strained from long examination of old pictures."[55] But certainly a minimum of doubt is cast on the portrait's singular nature--a whole group of viewers cannot be deluded easily.

In La Fée aux miettes, a major re-evaluation/disauthentication occurs in the chapter headings, which are of course a form of commentary on the discourse itself. The appearance of the book about Michel and his adventures does not relegate the story to the status of pure fiction --part of the story has been documented by Daniel's research.

While Hoffmann enjoys the technique of re-evaluation, Der goldene Topf presents an odd case. Generally speaking, the authenticity of the supernatural zone is undercut almost against the narrator's will, by the introduction of natural possibilities such as dreams or intoxication. The story is labelled after all a "Märchen," so such notions constitute a form of re-evaluation. Yet it is only in the concluding twelfth vigil that the reader gains any appreciation of the narrator's view of what has happened in the story. The final lines indicate that the state of being of Anselmus is merely that of life in poetry. All things are possible, since imagination provides access to this second world of illusion and fantasy. And the insertion of "Ende des Märchens" is a sharp reminder that this is only a fairy tale created for modern times--it has been perhaps after all only a marvellous fabrication and an allegory about the powers of poetic inspiration.

Whether this constitutes a self-cancellation of narrative is dubious since it is not a totally world-destabilizing procedure, and will be seen in a later discussion to involve a fusion of levels of reality. It is in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht that the most clear self-cancellation of narrative occurs, but even there the story is not totally cancelled, because doubts are merely raised and not absolutely established. The postscript does place the entire preceding narrative in doubt. Did the events really happen, or are they only projections of the mind? Perhaps the whole thing was only a dream, including the party, Julie, and the story of the lost reflection. (We are not told whether the manuscript is a physical fact or not!) All is questioned in terms of opposites. Were there incursions from another world, or did the Enthusiast simply invent the whole thing? He "almost" believes the latter, and apologizes directly to E.T.A. Hoffmann! Obviously a first-person narrative self-destructs more easily than a third-person narrative, where established narrative facts are harder to deny.

Charles Passage points out that the concluding lines of The Nose are a transposition of the ending of Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht where it is suggested that the events may have been only an illusion.[56] Certainly in The Nose a tentative re-evaluation is replaced by a somewhat doubtful insistence that "such things do happen"--a deliberate refusal to deny the story! The self-reproach and admission of the absurdity of the story is quickly followed by a feeble support of the fantastic possibilities. In spite of all the narrator's doubt, there is no final categorical denial of the story's truth as told.

At the opposite end of the narrative, stories can contain an initial withdrawal of authentication. They can of course begin in a very realistic, assertive way, as do The Nose and The Portrait; with personal letters so that narrative authentication is postponed, as in Der Sandmann; or, by having an "editor" suggest that the protagonist cannot distinguish fantasy from reality, which is a warning qualifying the rest of Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht. But an explicit statement about the non-factual status of a work merely conditions the reader for a fictional interpretation, as opposed to a description of reality.[57] What will be true in the basic narrative world of Der goldene Topf becomes immediately problematic because of the sub-title, Ein Märchen aus der neuen Zeit. There will be no attempt to clarify what happens, or explain--yet the mono-level ontology of the marvellous will not be allowed to dominate, as alternate natural explanations are offered.

But what of La Fée aux miettes, which is not only declared in the preface to be a "fantastic" story, but also to be a sottise with a ridiculous story line? The author apologizes for such a creation, and comments in a self-deprecatory way on his own writing procedure, deliberately undercutting the authenticity of the story and highlighting its invention. Advised not to even start to read the story, how is the reader to expect anything except a capricious narration? Yet Nodier takes great care to establish the necessity of the reader's belief, which he feels can only be generated by that of the author himself! The pleasures of a "fantastic story" are such that the author's belief in the story is paramount. The reader cannot otherwise accept and enjoy. "...[P]our intéresser dans le conte fantastique, il faut d'abord se faire croire, et qu'une condition indispensable pour se faire croire, c'est de croire. Cette condition une fois donnée, on peut aller hardiment et dire tout ce que l'on veut."[58] So why does Nodier withdraw his own essential condition for fantastic narrative before he even begins to tell the story? Why does he take an ironic attitude to his own story and highlight its fictitious creation? Perhaps he knows that readers are perverse and will deliberately pay more attention if told that a story is nonsense, and will look for verisimilitude where there is none! Perhaps Nodier challenges his readers to provoke their interest, and to accentuate the fantastic ambiguity of his story. In any case, the limited self-irony of the preface is continued by the framework narrator, who also has an ability to laugh at his own beliefs and statements.

Ironic attitude is a pervasive kind of self-destruction found in Romantic fantastic narration. The chapter headings found in La Fée aux miettes have a function similar to that of the preface, because they constitute a meta-narrative commentary which reminds the reader of that preface--a rather "meta-framing" effect. As part of the discourse, the headings highlight the narration or "telling," pre-establish the content of each chapter, and undercut the authenticity of events by underlining their fictional status. Because they constitute pre-evaluations of the story content, they emphasize the story invention as a whole. Their meta-narrative comment is often caustic. For example, the heading to Chapter II indicates that Michel will be the most reasonable character in the story. Chapter XXVI is billed as "Le dernier et le plus court de la narration de Michel, qui est par conséquent le meilleur du livre." And the return to the framework is: "Conclusion. Qui n'explique rien et qu'on peut se dispenser de lire."[59]

Ironic attitude manifests itself variously in the other stories. One of the main results generated by Romantic irony is a foregrounded narration which ensues from the visible presence of the teller of the tale, who breaks story illusion, and establishes a dual authorial tone and attitude of involvement and detachment. By highlighting the poetic function, which becomes a focal point in itself, expression dominates over content. By calling attention to the artistic procedure and devices, a distance is created between the events and the reader's appreciation. This kind of self-conscious narration does not destroy the effects of the fantastic. On the contrary, because of Hoffmann's flirtations with self-reference, the relationship between the fiction and the actual world of writing is thematized, thereby foregrounding the fictional space and further highlighting the hybrid nature of the fictional world. Irony is limited in Der goldene Topf, where the only references to creating the story are in the subtitle and the concluding inability to finish the story without assistance. The overt presence of the narrator in the pleas for reader involvement, and the counterfactual world projections which involve the reader, do however point to the difficulty which the narrator experiences in assembling the story. Irony is much more evident in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, where there is a constant duality of tone and attitude as the protagonist/narrator hesitates between involvement and detachment, or identification and distancing. Multiperspectivism as to the ontological status of the narrative world and levels of reality, fluctuations in style, fragmentary structure, as well as literary parody, all contribute to a basic hesitation between creating and breaking illusion. The framing effect in particular highlights the invention of the story. The concluding direct address to E.T.A. Hoffmann (who is after all the inventor of the whole story) further accentuates the fictional status of the account. The technique of hesitation between building and breaking illusion is most apparent in Der Sandmann, where a "detached" narrator emphasizes the process of narration in direct reader address. This deliberate reference to the problems of the discourse introduces the notion of "making up" the story, and draws attention to the narrative devices. To suggest in meta-textual commentary that the story could be told in different ways underlines the creative process of telling, and destroys any sense of actuality.

While The Portrait is significantly without Romantic irony, The Nose is filled with irony towards the process of telling a story. Manifest in the disruptive narration, the direct reader addresses, and all of the inconsistency which has already been detailed, irony undermines the entire story. If the narrator does not take himself seriously, how can the reader do so? He loses all credibility, not only because of self-contradiction, but also because in taking an ironic, self-deprecatory attitude towards his own authority he destroys the authenticity of the fictional world created.[60] The norms and rules of narrative procedure are flouted, because the ironic attitude reduces all of the narrative statements to non-binding utterances which cannot be challenged or checked against any narrative facts. Such a narrator generates suspicion and distrust, and there is no one else to tell the reader what "happened." After all, if the narrator adopts an ironic attitude to his own claims, he plays a sort of narrative "game,"[61] in which anything may be true (as in Der Sandmann when the devices are exposed). The conclusion in particular is narrated in such a way that the whole sequence of events is clarified as only a story--not events which are told in story form, but an invented story, which is then questioned as to its propriety. The ultimate irony is that the narrator asks how an author could choose such subject matter which is neither edifying nor financially profitable! (This is much like the Enthusiast addressing E.T.A.Hoffmann.) No wonder Doležel claims that the existence of fictional worlds becomes under these circumstances indeterminate between fictional existence and non-existence. If a narrator doubts the existence of his own creations, there can be no authentication, and all events are undermined. "Non-authentic fictional worlds are self-destructive by undermining the very foundation on which they are erected: fictional existence."[62] The situation is further complicated in The Nose by a biting satire which extends the significance of the story to include a "hidden" social commentary, especially about officialdom and bureaucracy. Gogol shows great disdain, but the story is somehow more laughable as a result.

Chapter Three: Results of the Failure to Authenticate Narrative Worlds

Ambiguous world construction

By applying the principle that fictional worlds are generated and defined by the descriptive system of a narration, and recognizing their special ontological status as autonomous semiotic structures, we can also realize that ambiguity is recognized within those structures and is dependent upon semiotic procedures. The "meaning" produced and understood in fantastic texts is delimited by the non-authentication procedures employed within the discourse. The instability of the fictional world is generated by the type of narrative procedures which have been discussed since stability can only be a result of the manner of presentation of narrative circumstances and events. We have seen that the fantastic tales under study share a range of basic qualities, and employ mechanisms which result in a textual ambiguity, which provokes reader involvement and imaginative participation. It has long been recognized that fantastic narrative exploits a sense of mystery and foreboding, as well as potential reference to the supernatural. What is more interesting is that the reader of fantastic narrative is confronted by a fictional world, the very existence of which is indefinite and which presents problems on the simplest level of understanding what "happens." Without clear textual indications, the reader's task of interpretation or elucidation becomes enormously complicated, and any possible further extrapolation, to use Wolterstorff's terms, is blocked.[63]

What is "possible" depends entirely on what the narration establishes as possible. The non-authentication of both alternate explanations creates the well-known hesitation of the fantastic. A close reading of the events does not yield a solution to the ambiguity found in fantastic narrative, because textual indicators do not support either explanation adequately or exclusively. Two story interpretations, or more precisely, two _accounts_ of events are _mutually_ exclusive and equally (in)valid. Brooke-Rose is more explicit:

> The complexity and subtlety of the pure fantastic lies in its absolute ambiguity, so that instead of one diffuse _fabula_ we have two clear, simple, but mutually exclusive fabulas, and consequently a superficially transparent, non-replete (economical) _sjužet_, which is in fact dense and utterly baffling.[64]

No matter how the reader may try to reconcile the accounts, textual manipulation of permanent gaps in both discourse and story will prevent any clarification, and reinforce the textual enigma.

In an unstable narrative world, "reality" is never established categorically, being dependent on an ambiguous manner of presentation. It has been suggested that a narrator's _reliability_ is required to produce a fantastic effect.[65] Quite on the contrary, although there are exceptions such as the lucid, compact prose characterized by the precision and understatement of the pedantic narrator in Mérimée's _La Venus d'Ile_, the observations of a narrator generate more of a fantastic effect if considered _doubtful_, and his attitude dubious and equivocal. His world view need never be "accepted." A possible world is more or less _convincing_, largely depending on the narrator's reliability and the authority vested by narrative convention. If the narrator's authority is undermined by the kinds of measures we have analysed, then the only "reliable" source of authentication is lost, and it becomes possible for a narrative world to be created where there is no authentication. Although all events become in this case "possible," none of them achieve a "true" status, and _ambiguity_ dominates.[66]

Although indeterminacy is random in fantastic narrative because of the narrative transmission, we do not find in it the thematized structural incompleteness or "radical gap" of postmodernism. Fantastic texts do not destroy entirely the mechanisms of narrative authentication. Doležel explains that if the norms of authentication are abandoned, a third category of "without authentication" must be added to those of "authentic" and "non-authentic." Otherwise we cannot account for the construction of a narrative world, because the non-authentic motifs would not yield such a world.[67] Even texts like those analysed in this study do construct narrative worlds which can be distinguished as such, but simply do not authenticate those worlds. Doležel concludes that "...two basic aspects of alternative narrative worlds should be kept separate: their introduction (construction) and their authentication."[68]

Establishment of basic narrative reality

Every work of fiction establishes for itself a basic narrative "reality" which is more or less apparent to both characters and readers. The nature of this process of world construction has been examined in the introductory comments, as well as the notion of degrees of difference from any actual reality. Clearly a realistic narrative assumes a link between the literary work and the real world, since the subject matter is possible in the real world, and even "true to" that real world. In fantastic narrative--at least as exemplified in the stories under study --the fiction is separated from actual reality, with minimal reference to an external world. The fiction remains visible and obvious. Fictional "possibilities" are distinctly autonomous, without reference to external truth or wisdom. In fact, fantastic narrative may not seriously undermine the reader's understanding of the actual world. The laws of nature are not challenged in any extra-textual sense, but only within the fictional world. An extension of significance is always possible, but is is not a necessary demand of the fantastic genre, which often delights in its own self-sufficiency, and is not especially concerned with providing "significance" for the real world, in the way which more realistic narrative does.

Naturally, the kind of basic world created by a narrative will always depend on the aspects of the real world which appear within the story, and we have a tendency as readers to categorize story worlds with reference to our own understanding of the actual world, as we have been taught to perceive it--as a "paramount reality." In fact, Doležel has observed that it is helpful to think of a basic narrative world which corresponds to our actual world (perhaps that of traditional realism), to which we can then relate other possible narrative worlds as alternatives. This basic narrative world would be constructed by narrative statements which do not contradict statements which we construe to be true of the actual world; for example, narrative agents would be human in terms of properties and the ability to act.[69] Clearly the worlds of the selected fantastic tales are characterized by a modal contrast with such a basic narrative world (although they remain worlds of living beings), but the precise arrangement of the modalities of possibility and impossibility is not clearly established by the narration.

The apparent basic reality in all of the stories is that of a world which includes events physically possible according to natural laws--worlds where the "expected" should occur, and sometimes does. The textual "reality" is not that of the supernatural, otherwise the stories would be purely marvellous. Yet the basic reality is not illustrated in its coherent totality. Only a part of a world is presented in any story, but in these fantastic narratives, the foregrounded elements are not sufficient to create a stable or definitive world. Basic reality has an indeterminate status--it fails to exhibit sufficient evidence for its existence. The fantastic usually involves a deficiency or lack which promotes the fantastic sequence (something similar to the basic "lack" of the fairy tale), and within the narration the implications generated by the narrative statements only serve to highlight that deficiency--a deficiency which leaves the basic narrative world inadequate in terms of explanatory force. In other words, what will "happen" will not be explicable within the meagrely established confines of a basic narrative world. The determination of the fictional world through narrative/descriptive sentences remains incomplete and without totalizing significance. No amount of meta-narrative commentary or subjective narrator intrusions of the sort which have been discussed will replace this basic lack of world definition. On the contrary, such mechanisms of narration only serve to obscure any fragment of basic narrative reality which may be evident.

Obviously some narrations offer more sense of a basic reality than others. The Portrait, for example, establishes a "realistic" story which depicts a talent dissipated in triviality and greed, and continues with this reality even after the "dreams" episode, as if nothing extraordinary has happened. A basic narrative world is maintained throughout the Chartkov story, with the exception of the "dreams" and final crisis--factors which introduce doubt about the natural explanations. But the textual role of a basic narrative reality is not always so clear. It seems that the anchoring of the supernatural elements in some sort of "normal" routine reality is essential to the fantastic, otherwise there could be no contrast emphasized between the natural and supernatural aspects of the story, and hence no cause for the essential hesitation between possible explanations of story events. The reader must perceive at least a partial set of intrinsic laws of possibility and necessity. We look in fact for some kind of "style" or pre-suppositions implied by the text, which will tell us how an imaginary world is to be received--for traits within the narration which may indicate an overall principle of story reality. We like to assume a basic reality which can then branch to a second ontological zone (or to secondary levels of reality) as soon as irreconcilable inconsistencies are discovered within the apparent structure of the story reality. But fantastic narrative puts in doubt these basic distinctions, since the domain of narrative reality becomes obscure. Although postulated as existing and capable of undergoing attack by an intrusion of the supernatural, textual reality is less "conventional" than we may ~~be~~ accustomed to expect. In fact, while narratives like The Portrait do seem to establish a basic reality which depends upon a "natural" ontology, others do not even establish a definite distinction between the basic reality and the supernatural elements. The more definite basic reality of The Portrait does not improve its fantastic quality. In fact, without the second part which serves to introduce more emphatically the "other" world, the story would be purely uncanny.

In Hoffmann's stories under discussion, a basic reality is not routinely established. The first-person narrative of Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht does not permit a clear basic reality to evolve-- what "happens" only confuses any perception of ontological zones. In

Der goldene Topf, within a few lines of the beginning, the threat of the supernatural has already imposed itself onto what should be a basic narrative reality, instantly de-stabilizing that narrative world. But The Nose is the ultimate example of the potential lack of a basic narrative reality: the domain of "reality" cannot be distinguished from a second ontological zone. The two are fused, the "unnatural" integrated almost instantly into the story reality, each as incomplete and ambiguous as the other. Only because of the framing effect can any basic narrative world be identified in La Fée aux miettes. The narrative reality can only include that of the framework story, and the "researched" world of Greenock. Michel's experiences cannot be categorized conclusively. Even these generalizations prove problematic, because it is within this "basic" world that some extraordinarily odd events occur (such as the births of the "marked" children), so that the implications of the second ontological zone encroach upon the framework narrative through Daniel's research.

Hybrid worlds

As we see, basic narrative reality may be subject to an incomplete definition, and forced into a limited textual role. It may also be subjected to the radical introduction of supernatural elements, which are an exception to the real. Supernatural events inexplicably defy the natural laws of even the most flimsy of basic realities in fantastic texts. Such events may range from the merely uncanny, often with a strong psychological emphasis as in Der Sandmann, to truly radical intrusions from a second ontological zone. Whatever is presumed to be the familiar, expected representation of reality is interrupted by incursion from a supernatural sphere--not necessarily involving fear, but often threatening because "different," and destructive of narrative world harmony. A breach of the normal order of reason and logic occurs, as the supernatural influences impinge on routine life, affecting personal interrelations and the most basic conduct of mundane existence for the characters. The extreme case is The Nose, where the "supernatural" intrusion is of the most brutal and bizarre nature, although somehow "acceptable" to the characters in spite of the normal background for the event. How the characters accept the supernatural will influence reader reaction, and of course relate to the secondary levels of reality. The supernatural may be introduced simply as a basic story "condition" as in La Fée aux miettes, with the quest for the singing mandrake, then progress in an ever-increasing supernatural emphasis.

In Hoffmann's tales there is an open invitation to the reader to abandon himself to the strange worlds. In Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, the reader is actually requested not to try to distinguish between zones of reality or character worlds--no "answers" will be possible or even relevant! "Fantasy" will work best with reader involvement and willing acceptance. In Der Sandmann, the narrator expresses a similar need to express "inner vision," and to encourage belief so that the reader will be disposed to the fantastic or "wonderful" elements. A similar stance is taken in Der goldene Topf in order to involve the reader's imagination, with an open declaration of the intention to reveal the realm of the supernatural.[70]

Such proposals have no place in Gogol's tales under study, which make no pleas for reader involvement or sympathy, and do not propose blatantly to reveal a supernatural sphere. On the contrary, the supernatural is revealed in The Nose as a kind of narrative fact, as in a fairy tale, yet nonetheless disturbing, inadmissible, and "unreal" to any sane reader. The supernatural event is perhaps a reversal of expected reality, but it is taken as reality or some sort of "unreality." When Kovaliov's nose appears riding about in a carriage, dressed properly as a civil councillor, the event is described as "inexplicable" and an "extraordinary phenomenon."[71] Otherwise, the description is matter-of-fact--the event simply happens within narrative reality even though the entire narrative world is not bizarre. But it seems to "happen" only semantically--the fantastic is engendered by words. There is produced a verbal fantasy, in which the nose has a certain semantic existence which implies a "real" existence, but which is never substantiated! Gogal attempts to go beyond words with words. The supernatural sphere is denied authentication by a kind of narrative "play" which is involved in the telling of the story.

As evidenced by the analysis of the narrative transmission, the credibility of the supernatural is not built by any deliberate quality of narration or mechanisms of narrative representation. On the contrary, the introduction of the supernatural constructs a second ontological zone without authentication, and subject to permanent indeterminacy precisely because of the strategies of narration, which only serve to imply what "happens." Since fantastic texts focus on the supernatural, the dominant ambiguity concerns essentially only the reaction to those supernatural elements. In fact, it is the non-confirmation of the very existence of a supernatural domain which produces the ambiguity and reader hesitation characteristic of the genre. Because of the mechanisms of narration which have been detailed, and because of the frequent introduction of the supernatural through unreliable character statements and/or focalization (which will be discussed in Chapter Four), the existence of the supernatural is never categorically confirmed. In the marvellous, the supernatural appears as a physical fact--as real as the rest of the story reality, and integrated into one ontology. But in the fantastic stories under study, the supernatural events seem "credible" in a least two different senses, since they are "possible" in more natural terms--by postulating dreams or madness, for instance.

Only the semantic factors of indeterminacy can create such a multi-perspectivism. Literally, the lack of detail, or the provision of misleading and puzzling detail, can establish the fantastic effect. There must be of course enough of a sense of reality provided for the events to prevent their perfunctory dismissal by the reader, but no substantiation must dominate or seem irrefutable, otherwise the fantastic effect will vanish. In fact, the narrator need not make any direct reference to the contradictions inherent in the fantastic world, and the stories are more challenging where there is no such discussion. Explanations are then denied, which could support either code of understanding. The lack of definition of the ontological zones has been identified in terms of the deliberate provocation produced by the "inadequate" narrative procedures. (Or as Todorov explains, the actual perception of the supernatural events obscures the supernatural itself.)[72]

Traditionally, the supernatural need never be "proven": if it is present and authenticated in a text, that presence is self-defining, and need provoke no further external questions, very much in accordance with the basic principles of possible-world semantics. Yet in fantastic narrative, we are provided only with the assurance of a definite possibility that the supernatural has occurred. It can never be fully eliminated by rational reader explanation. To leave the supernatural unexplained implies that it can exist, since not denied. Even if on the surface the apparently supernatural events seem to result from hallucination or dream, as in the first-person narrative of La Fée aux miettes, the reader retains the impression that these events may be part of that narrative world and really happen. The more "solid" narration of a story like La Venus d'Ile could be judged to provide a less exciting brand of the fantastic, although permanently ambiguous, because it remains only an account of what seems to happen, and does not involve the subjective semantics of an "involved" narrator.

We know from extant studies of the fantastic that a narrative may suggest a supernatural explanation, yet not verbalize it in categorical terms. The supernatural explanation is often "preferred" as a tentative final evaluation so that a story leans towards the marvellous. Likewise, it may suggest a natural or uncanny explanation, yet not refute the supernatural outright. Supernatural events can seem more or less incompatible with what is seen as a basic narrative reality or ontological zone. In fact, as the reader tries to transform into certainty what is only "possible" in the narrative world, his interpretive activity will be more or less blocked by the narration. We have seen the devices at work, but an explicit example of the differences between the two versions of The Portrait will clarify how narrative transmission can build two very different imaginary worlds.

The first version of The Portrait, published in 1835, projects a mythological or marvellous world, including states of affairs which could never be actual in our real world, but for which a supernatural explanation exists. The many differences from the second version have been detailed by Lavrin[73] and Passage.[74] The portrait is not bought, but simply appears on the young artist's wall after having been seen in a shop. The portrait figure offers direct advice to exchange artistic genius and development for instant fame and success, so that the "dreams" scene is much less ambiguous and more supernatural. There is a more explicit self-explanation of the usurer's desire to be painted--he is identified as the embodiment of the Antichrist, half of whose life will go into the portrait if painted well. Because of the explicit identification and revelation of influence, the story is much less fantastic. The portrait then appears on its painter's wall, and will not burn. The idea is introduced that in fifty year's time, at the time of the new moon, and if the story be told, the power of the portrait will be extinguished. This time frame coincides (of course) with the auction, and the portrait in fact vanishes from the canvas, replaced by a simple landscape. The story contains a collective authentication of the supernatural existence of the devil in the portrait.

The familiar second version of the story, published in 1842, drops all of these blatantly marvellous elements, removes the collective confirmation of the supernatural, includes numerous "realistic" elements, undermines the authority of the narrator, and projects an ambiguous narrative world. Chartkov does not realize the evil impact of the portrait until he perceives his own failure as an artist, and the jealousy caused by the curse takes hold. The story is told in such a way that the second ontological zone is not foregrounded until Chartkov's crisis and the second narrative, by the end of which the supernatural realm has convincingly infringed onto the previously built narrative reality. Only the final disposition of the portrait preserves the fantastic tone. The portrait is said to be "stolen" while the listener's attention is diverted, and does not simply disappear. Such a statement alters the tone greatly and introduces the familiar doubt and hesitation. (Other aspects of the fantastic narration of the second version of The Portrait are examined throughout this study.)

The suggestion of supernatural explanation can be seen then to be quite different from an outright narrative statement. The support of the supernatural which is generated within what seems to be a basic narrative reality has the most impact. The search for a causal relation between facts or events which appear at first unrelated leads to the second ontological zone. As implications are provided by the narrator, certain explanations become more probable within the fictional world, and in fantastic texts, these tend to be supernatural causes. In terms of internal coherence, actual physical facts serve to substantiate the supernatural, especially if another independent character becomes involved. Examples would be the role of the coins in The Portrait, or Veronika's involvement in, and understanding of the supernatural in Der goldene Topf. In Der Sandmann, Clara does not believe in the supernatural, and does not become involved in such events; therefore, she does not serve to substantiate the events which involve her lover, as Veronika does. The example of La Fée aux miettes is especially noteworthy, because of the use of significant marginally supportive details. Michel is in fact opulently clothed and adorned with gems. He does seem to know all languages--certainly he knows English, French, and Hebrew. The name "Belkiss" appears in the Hebrew inscription, and is corroborated by the old Jew: the name is not limited to Michel's imagination. The reports on the father and uncle who "serve" the princess constitute also a kind of support for what happens to the protagonist. But all of these things are told by the narrator/protagonist without external authentication. From within the framework narration, the fact that Michel does not return to Greenock does not prove that he has flown off to a glorious new supernatural life. It is significant that the practical Daniel cannot find the crumb fairy's marvellous house, and that this person has been unknown to everyone in the community. Nor are Michel's extraordinary experiences acknowledged by the characters questioned. Such support would not be viable in a fantastic narrative. At best, the "other" world has an independent fictional status provided by its appearance in book form--a status not without disturbing implications. Certainly the framework narrator never claims that Michel's story was about reality.

The result of this indeterminate status of supernatural incursions is of course the coalescence of onological zones, both without authentication. Because of the properties of the narrative statements, the relationship between ontological zones is unstable, creating a hybrid world where there evolves an incongruous mixture of elements which would be expected in our real world, and those which could not actually happen. This co-existence of spheres, which seem to be related in an indefinable way, exacerbates the already disconcerting nature of the subject matter of fantastic tales--creates a double problem of understanding. Not only do events seem impossible, but since no ontological category appears to dominate without ambiguity and confusion, all narrative truth values seem lost. The narrator can relate all manner of "impossible facts" in the most routine way, as in all of the selected stories, and especially in La Fée aux miettes, where Nodier's taste for the marvellous tradition is abundantly evident. Yet no narrator of fantastic tales is ever able to integrate the supernatural event(s) into his routine understanding of reality. Since everything is recounted as happening within the same general frame of reference, that is, everyday existence, a kind of *deliberate* confusion develops about the incompatible domains and a duality of experience and existence, which are governed by conflicting modalities. The *extent* of any supernatural influence is never clear, in a narrative world where such events are allowed to occur without any narratorial approval or agreement! Contrary to marvellous narrative, an explanation is needed, although withheld. Between this "other world" or second dimension and the "natural" narrative world, there is a gap--both zones remain incompatible and mutually contradictory.

It is the *interaction* of ontological zones which provides fantastic narrative with its unique tension. Nodier wanted to see ordinary things in a "fantastic" light, and to present the marvellous and the verisimilar within one text. It is that overlapping of two ontological zones which not only creates the recognized hybrid world structure, but also incorporates, by semantic means, the most bizarre narrative statements into an indeterminate and *provisional* imaginary world. If the "unreal" becomes intimately connected with reality, it competes for priority with the reader's appreciation of a more routine reality, and in fact generates a *multiple* reality which cannot be understood without permanent confusion. Martínez-Bonati explains that "...different fictional systems of reality not only can coexist side by side--successively--in a single world (pluriregionality), but they can coalesce and corrode each other (contamination, ironization, estrangement)."[75] Only the narrative transmission can effect this mutual influence.

While we recognize that hybrid worlds are contingent upon an unstructured, unlimited access between ontological zones, the precise nature of the possible connections remains as obscure as the language which describes them. Der Sandmann provides a perfect example of a narrative procedure which is used to incorporate the supernatural into narrative reality with alarmingly subtle ambiguity. The narrator indicates that there has been a fire, and that Nathanael's possessions have been moved in his absence to a room directly across from the professor's house. But he also says that Nathanael did not find this strange, thereby "telling" the reader that this was perhaps a mysterious event. The narrator then points out that Nathanael can see Olimpia through the windows staring in his direction. But again we are told that the protagist lends this no significance. Clearly the narrator projects a significance and uses this device to highlight the events, so that a subtle, insidious infiltration of reality results.

It is after all the fantastic nature of real life which the narrator tries to project. Certainly all three authors share the Romantic notion of a "second" reality which overlaps with the expected one of surface appearances. Sometimes horrible and hostile, sometimes exquisitely beautiful and benevolent, this second reality remains somehow unidentifiable and beyond the limits of both routine, conscious perception and the ability to express or describe it. Yet, lurking behind surface appearances, and within the very mechanisms of narrative communication, it cannot be denied by the protagonist or reader. The notion of reality and the words used to create it become a mere façade, behind which another realm and process of understanding lurk. What we apprehend in the narrative transmission as ambiguity is the activator of this deeper, transcendent sense of inadequate understanding.

Transition between worlds

The protagonists gain access to this special sphere, not only through their own "poetic" or irrational natures, but possibly through direct supernatural influences. The qualification of this access always remains unclear, yet the existence of supernatural characters cannot be ignored as a narrative device for effecting the transition between ontological zones. All of the stories under study involve supposed supernatural intervention in one form or another, involving either adaptation, metamorphosis, or disguise, as well as sudden appearance and disappearance. Whether the supernatural characters really exist or are mere illusions is never clear, but they are assigned an ontological status and capability which is different from those of other characters, even if only attributed because of illusions or fantasy. The figures are thus an integral part of the semantic indeterminacy--a sort of embodiment of the basic fantastic confusion. Seldom described in detail, for the reasons already cited, these figures are not mere traditional clichés, but are part of the elaborate narrative structure of fantastic narrative. They interact with reality, corroding protagonist and reader comprehension of both their exceptional capabilities and the modalities which govern their conduct. The extent of the protagonists' involvement with these figures, whether real or imagined, re-defines their own modal restrictions, so that characters like Anselmus and Michel become like fairy tale heros, assigned new abilities which could never be considered natural, although still possible as pure fantasy. The sinister influences are likewise never defined--how can we ever know what kind of control Coppelius has had over Nathanael in Der Sandmann, or what kind of evil force the usurer has embodied in The Portrait?

More important to the transition between ontological zones is the question of correspondence between "worlds" in the form of doubles and counterparts. We can speak of counterparts, or "versions" of the same kind of entity. For example, Clara and Olimpia are counterparts in Der Sandmann, each seen by Nathanael wrongly, as the opposite of what they each really are, so that Clara becomes ironically the lifeless automaton. Olimpia is presumed to listen, understand, and appreciate, when in fact it is Clara who really cares. Clara of course does not believe in Nathanael's "delusions," so she becomes a logical, reasonable counterpart to the supernatural sphere in which the protagonist believes. She "represents" the basic narrative reality. Veronika is a somewhat similar figure in Der goldene Topf, although her involvement tends to authenticate the supernatural zone. As the counterpart of Serpentina, she too belongs to the prosaic sphere, and must be rejected by the hero in favour of the poetic/illusory or supernatural. There are also two pairs of male counterparts in this story: Anselmus and Lindhorst who have access to a poetic sphere, and Heerbrand and Paulmann who remain "imprisoned" in prosaic reality.

But the interest in counterparts goes far beyond this limited notion of version, to the concept of two alternate incarnations of one individual co-existing in the same fictional world--genuine doubles, a theme which requires a radical manipulation of the semantic traits of compossibility and personal identity.[76] Doubles necessarily involve multiple ontology within a fictional world, because they are in fact alternate manifestations of the same individual which exist as two different fictional characters. Only because of "shifting" ontological zones can we appreciate each manifestation as compossible with the other characters within the narrative world. Possible-world semantics allows the recognition that an individual character can exist as two separate and alternate incarnations within the same world, since any individual can be assigned a set of innumerable "doubles" within possible worlds--"doubles" which would pursue different or alternate life courses.[77] Obviously not all doubles are fully authenticated and can contribute more or less to textual ambiguity, but the basic narrative function of creating doubles is to destabilize the ontological zones within the imaginary world, whether the doubles are fully authenticated or not.

In Hoffmann's narrative worlds, it is the interaction of doubles which provokes most interest and serves most to enhance basic doubt and ambiguity. Doubles struggle for dominance, and confuse and often threaten the hero. They are inexplicably involved in a supernatural zone and have undefined powers which make them modally mutable. They function in two ontological zones--for example, the demonic and the world of everyday reality--and serve to "represent" those domains, which the narrator has placed in contiguous perspective. Since they "belong" in two zones, their identities correspond with those two spheres. In Der goldene Topf, the Lindhorst/Salamander character has two incarnations which seem to involve metamorphosis. He is especially perplexing because of his second non-human self which implies such a radically different second existence. The old woman is likewise a transition figure with the multiple identities of street merchant, fortune teller, witch (who can appear in inanimate forms), and even a former nurse maid.

While these characters are made to appear to operate in two fully separate ontological zones, this is not always made so obvious. In

Der Sandmann, the reader has difficulty in deciding whether the names Coppelius/Coppola are co-referential or not. For example, both names appear in the concluding narration, with the name Coppelius used from two distinct points of view: focalized through the protagonist as the huge and formidable Coppelius, but then referred to again by the narrator with that designation. This is a tantalizing reduplication of the hybrid world structure within the narration. Still, Coppelius is a character in the story, and technically he can appear in this scene. If his identity is somehow confused with that of the barometer dealer, this can be interpreted to occur all within one "world." What is more interesting is that Coppelius not only "doubles" as Coppola, but as the dreaded and horrible "Sandman." In this role, he not only terrorizes the child, but but does in fact take away Nathanael's eyes through the supernatural process of giving vision (and life) to the automaton. His apparent powers, which seem beyond the natural, include this capacity of Sandman who can rob Nathanael of his life force, and blind him to normal happiness.

A similar confusion of how many ontological zones are involved occurs in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht. As in the case of Coppelius and Coppola, it is impossible to decide whether the characters are transformed several times, or are different individuals with uncanny affinities. The little brown man has two faces, two names, two moods, and two lives--one domestic and one exotic in Italy. Only his singular fate unites the world of the manuscript with that of the Enthusiast's encounter. There is a correspondence between the Enthusiast's devil (der Feind) and the "comic book" devil figure of Dapertutto in the manuscript, but their relationship is never confirmed. Julie and Giulietta, who share the same name, are definite transition figures to a second ontological zone, functioning as devil/seductresses, but they may be separate individuals or two parts of the same being, since their descriptions are almost identical.

Correspondence is even more complicated in La Fée aux miettes, because not only does the little crumb fairy seem to function in two spheres as both a real beggar and a genuine fairy (with sisters who are ninety-nine reflections of herself), but she is also portrayed ambiguously as a double of the princess Belkiss "then and now." The time factor enriches the confusion delightfully, because Belkiss seems to be the young Fée aux Miettes, yet they co-exist as simultaneous doubles who presumably can interact with each other in another form and not only metamorphose, as on the eve of Michel's departure. The semantic potential of this kind of "twice doubled" character (beggar/fairy, three thousand year old fairy/Queen of Sheba) is enormous, culminating in the presumed fusion, on fulfilment of Michel's quest.

Gogol treats the question of correspondences between worlds quite differently. While the usurer/demonic figure in The Portrait is certainly a kind of ambiguous double in many ways similar to the Coppelius figure, and the picture "come alive" can be seen as a variant of the "double" theme, it is in The Nose where an unlikely double is created. While there is no significant duality of existence as in the wider fantastic tradition, certainly the nose itself becomes an independent individual, self-declared as such, and able to carry on an independent existence. One individual is split into two--a part (who cares which one?) becomes a whole, without further intimate relations with that whole. Certainly a part of the human body is not expected to develop abilities to act independently, yet this existence is never qualified by the narration, which does not presume or stipulate any particular type of unnatural influence. The ultimate absurdity is that the "hero" and his wayward nose/civil councillor resemble each other--they are both pompous imposters, concerned only with ambition and social status, and lacking any basic qualities of humanity, and are perhaps even "mirror images." It is significant that in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht the mirror image can also be seen as a double or alternate dream ego: it sets the perfect example for Gogol's literary nose.[78] In the earlier version of The Nose, the "double's" authenticity was withdrawn by the narrator's final judgements about the dream status of the events, and not left open and ambiguous as in the edition of 1842.

Questions of correspondence between ontological zones provided by the counterparts and specifically by doubles become involved in larger aspects of character authenticity, and the interrelationship of illusion and reality. These problems will be approached respectively within the context of levels of reality (Chapter Four) and the correlation between the authenticity of ontological zones and levels of reality (Chapter Five).

In addition to "human" counterparts, objects become transition devices, used by the narration to create correspondence between ontological zones. Certain objects seem to allow for access to a supernatural sphere, because of their semantic treatment within the narrative transmission. Hoffmann employs the medallion/mirror in Der goldene Topf to give Veronika the apparent ability to infiltrate Anselmus' mind according to the old woman's plans. The mirror as intermediary object is used also in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht. Mirrors provide after all a reversed, distorted, or at least indirect kind of perception. The spyglass functions similarly in Der Sandmann, where it distorts and subverts normal vision. In fact, the transformation of vision, or magical perception, is an important theme in Hoffmann's work. In Der goldene Topf, Lindhorst and the old woman seem to be able to make others see things as they wish them to be seen, rather than to actually transform the real objects. "Normal" vision can be distorted, in order to discover another world. Eyes are a favourite of the Romantics, used as plot construction devices. The whole of Der Sandmann is built on the references to eyes--those which the "sandman" can take away, Olimpia's dead eyes, which take life from Nathanael's devotion, Clara's remarkable eyes, and Coppola's "eyes" for sale. And in The Portrait, it is the eyes of the painting which are human, alive, and staring; the eyes of a multitude of portraits in the death scene; and the eyes in the would-be religious painting, all of which link reality with a supernatural zone through the theme of distorted vision. The portrait itself is used as a transition device, because of the effect of fear which it produces, and the sense of mystery about its real effects, which is maintained throughout the Chartkov story. Because the figure of the portrait remains unidentified in the first narrative, the portrait itself functions as a narrative agent, causing the inexplicable disconcerting feelings and changing Chartkov's fate, through a seemingly direct influence. In La Fée aux miettes, the miniature portraits in the locket link the protagonist to the crumb fairy and his "dreams" of Belkiss. The locket literally provokes fantasy, but also convinces Michel that he has not dreamt everything, since it is a real object (even in the framework narrative). The locket represents the possibility of uniting the doubles of the Fée and Belkiss, and more importantly, of personally achieving the ideal union by joining an infinite, special order. Significantly, it is only as Michel launches out on his quest that the second portrait is revealed: the union of inspiration and visible fact has been achieved, indicating the potential for some kind of ultimate transcendence of ordinary reality. The mandrake is of course a similar transition device, as are narcotics and intoxicants in general in fantastic narrative. These things can be seen as _liberators_ which allow access to a more worthwhile supernatural sphere, rather than as mere producers of hallucination or fantasy. Both _Der goldene Topf_ and _Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht_ employ this device. In fact, in the latter story, the goblet not only serves as a transformer between "worlds," but appears at the party, in the dream about the party, and then in the manuscript, linking three separate levels of character reality. Disguise need also be mentioned as a transition device--a means for a narrative agent from one zone to intervene in a basic narrative reality. Such devices abound in the tales, from disguised "devils," to noses which can masquerade as high ranking officials.

Re-definition of fantastic hesitation

Clearly the most obvious principle involved in fantastic texts--that of a permanently ambiguous perception by the reader--involves all of the mechanisms of transition between ontological zones which a narration employs. Since these narrative devices are used to indicate in a provisional way what occurs in the fictional world, they consequently enhance the reader reaction of hesitation towards the ontological status of those events. In combination with the other aspects of the failure to authenticate the narrative world, such mechanisms produce the destabilized atmosphere where neither the natural nor the supernatural events are allowed a certain existence.

Even on a casual reading of the selected tales, it is obvious that the imaginary worlds involve a range of modal possibilities which are simultaneous, self-contradictory, and radically incongruous. The nature of a hybrid world prohibits the forcing of the ambiguous world into any single ontological category. The tension between oppositions must remain --it results from the refusal of the narration to resolve a basic conflict or contradiction between two understandings of textual reality. Because of the textual constraints of the created world, reader hesitation is permanently encoded within the narrative ambiguity.

Bearing in mind the introductory discussion of the challenge which fantastic narrative provides for reader re-construction, it is now possible to add that the process of hesitation does not permit any adaptation by the reader to the events and their implications. Nor can the reader's experience of hesitation remain external and irrelevant to the narrative world experienced (as would be the case in Kafka's works). In the fantastic text, reader hesitation is "fed back" into the discourse, and is consequently crucial to any appreciation of the fantastic.

This situation results from the ever-present, rational, "our world" possibility which persists in all purely fantastic texts. We know that narrative worlds are understood by the reader according to logical implications, which we have seen to be completely limited by the nature of the narrative assertions. And we see that hesitation results because the characters and reader are confronted by events which do not conform to the apparent laws of the narrative world, without a radical re-evaluation of those laws, or a denial of the reality of the event. But it is this search for internal probability which is thwarted by the narration itself. If the reader is not told exactly how a basic reality functions, he cannot judge which explanation is most internally probable within the world. Reader expectations are thus denied to the extent that, although the purely natural explanation may seem in fact less probable within the fictional world, the reader is tempted by his own beliefs to accept it as more likely. This happens because he is denied the expected semantic factors of persuasion. Certainly the supernatural cannot be fully rationalized away--no natural explanation can stand alone, as complete and fully adequate. There may be no narrative stress whatsoever on the validity of a rational view. But in fact, external rationality obscures the direct appreciation of the textual "truth," in the reader's attempt to rationalize the facts, given the failure of the narration to properly establish an unambiguous narrative world. The possibility of a rational explanation--never denied textually as an option, problematic and uncertain--is therefore a means of misleading the reader. The inexplicable will remain.

Chapter Four: Levels of Reality and Narrative Transmission

Because the concept of fantastic hesitation not only involves ontological zones, but also the secondary levels of reality of characters, it is possible to see in less abstract terms how the reader is able to attempt a rational explanation of story events. To fully appreciate the deliberate provocation of fantastic narrative transmission, we must expand to a discussion of character involvement in narrative reality. The protagonists wonder whether their experiences are real, in which case another ontological zone exists and becomes part of their reality, or whether everything is only an illusion produced by natural causes such as dreams, madness, intoxication, or pure fantasy. The confused perception sustains the textual ambiguity and re-duplicates reader hesitation by lending substance to a natural explanation, not otherwise obvious in the text.

Character authenticity

Fictional characters are first of all not what the reader may want them to be. It has long been recognized that they are not like real people, because they are radically incomplete, mainly indeterminate, and with a discontinuous existence. They may have a tendency to inconsistency, and depend totally on the formal constraints which define them. Certainly fantastic narrative does not delimit characters well or portray a finalized or detailed figure. Too much definition, especially of mental states, can only serve to undermine the fantastic effect. But within narrative worlds characters can be more or less valid, without reference to any actual world. Totally fictional characters need not inspire any preconceived associations (as historical ones tend to), and as Pavel explains, they can be thought of as likely to have existed in *another* state of affairs--an alternate world.[79] In the fantastic tales, we have seen some of the ways in which the *fictionality* of the supernatural characters is exposed, setting them outside of the boundaries of any actual reality. Duplicity in particular serves this purpose. Radical inconsistencies prevent the reader from establishing where characters belong in terms of ontological zones, since their speech and actions are self-contradictory and are made revocable by the narration. Even the identities of the presumed natural characters are sometimes ambiguous. While a character like Clara is more authenticated within a provisional narrative reality, one like Julie is allowed only the most *tentative* existence--she may be only a projection from a painting! The Schlemihl character is the most problematic. As a literary character from another contemporary story, he simply *cannot* appear in the narrative world of *Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht* as a real character encountered by the narrator/protagonist. Such is not compossible! If the narrator is relating real experiences, he cannot have met a literary character, who could be known or recognized in *thought*, but not physically encountered, without a violation of textual boundaries.

Obviously readers are more tolerant of literary characters which seem compatible with real life, even if not "realistically" portrayed. A creature like Lindhorst is hard to accept, perhaps because he seems to lack awareness of his own stangeness. The description of the nose is manipulated to render the character inconceivable. In contrast, Michel is an "ordinary" human being who shows modesty in telling his extraordinary story. In spite of his strange experiences, he wins sympathy and reader identification. Perhaps the more "natural" a character seems, the easier it is for the reader to share the astonishment and confusion.

Relationship between prime narrative reality and secondary levels of reality

When we "relate" to characters like Michel or Anselmus, we enter their fictional world as they see it, and become exposed to a secondary level of reality. As readers, we tend to judge a character "world" by the character himself, unless directed otherwise by the narration. Once involved in the character's perception of reality, we face a second dilemma: not only the problem of what to believe, but that of whom to believe. Since the narrator has abdicated his role of authority, and his statements cannot be qualified or interpreted with any final authority, he also fails to establish a prime level of story reality which can distinguish events in terms of occurrence as story fact, or the mere projection of a character. Recalling the introductory discussion about a prime level of reality which is traditionally authenticated by the narration, and the necessity for the reader to be able to incorporate story events into the correct level of reality, it is now possible to clarify the relationship between prime and secondary levels of reality in fantastic narrative.

Within the stories the borderline between the two systems of reality is blurred because of the withdrawal of information by the narrator. While some aspects of the narrative world may still resemble our actual world and are consequently easily labelled as prime narrative reality, others constitute an erratic, seemingly impossible world, which may be hard to accept at face value, and are more readily considered to be alternate character universes of dreams, fantasy, etc. An indeterminate prime level of reality becomes open to radical misunderstanding. Since "facts" are denied, suppressed, undercut, or withdrawn, prime reality is not completely clear, and cannot be seen as an absolute fact. When ambiguous narrator statements are compared with those of characters, or the narrator focalizes through characters, an ambiguous world results, where the basic ontological hesitation is re-duplicated because the exact levels of reality may be ultimately undecidable. As both the characters and reader hesitate between two frames of reference, it may become impossible to see one reality as dominant or prime. As the narrative vacillates between two (or more) different "realities," the "reference" world represented by the narrator may become entirely subordinated to a character's organization, in opposition to what would seem to be actual in the story. As Ryan points out, within this complexity, private worlds may be represented in greater detail than their reference world, so that narrative truth cannot be evaluated. It is after all impossible to evaluate the truth of characters' beliefs.[80]

It is traditional to judge the speech and reactions of characters as true or false by correspondence with the narrator's discourse, since it is these statements which create the narrative world. In a third-person narrative the reader tends to judge the authenticity of any visible character domain by its correspondence with the world constructed by a reliable narrator. The problem starts in fantastic narrative, when it is no longer possible to distinguish narrator statements from those of a protagonist, and becomes extreme in first-person narrative, where the fictional speaker as narrator has two separate "identities"--the "I" of the narrator, and the "I" of the character--and projects accordingly two levels of reality, with a possible interplay between fantasy and reality. First-person narrative thus denies judgement by coherence, since, as in

La Fée aux miettes and Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, the narrator/ protagonist projects a world which may be only a secondary narrative reality. Certainly the framing effect and the "editor's" foreward cast doubt on the validity of any prime reality the reader may be willing to accept. Narrative discourse is fused with the personal character view, resulting in a limited perception of story reality, for both narrator and reader. In addition, the speech and reactions of other characters are seen relative to the protagonist's point of view, so that even though their understanding of events may appear different from that of the narrator, there can be no "external" evaluation possible, since these character views are not projected back onto story reality (as they are in Der Sandmann, for example).

A more sophisticated way of looking at narrative truth value involves the assignment of such value on the basis of a correspondence directly with the narrative facts which are part of the narrative world, regardless of any narrator's statements.[81] The problem with fantastic narrative is that such "facts" are largely indeterminate, precisely because of the mechanisms of narrative transmission which have been detailed. Without narrative authentication, and because the characters tend to believe in their own secondary worlds as actual, the reader cannot determine where reality ends and fantasy begins, or to what extent character beliefs may be authentic. Quite simply, if the truth of an apparently prime narrative world is indeterminate, the reader cannot gauge how character statements will "measure up." Conformity and contradiction are not obvious. We can see, for example, that the reality projected by Michel in La Fée aux miettes is different from what could be considered the prime reality of the framework, including the community of Greenock, the routine life of which can be accessed through Daniel. But with nothing more than a sympathetic interest shown by the framework narrator, we cannot determine precisely what the difference are. Michel's world conforms at least in part, but how it becomes so radically contradictory can only be answered in two mutually exclusive ways, neither of which is satisfactory. The frame narrator's subjective, "poetic" stance neither accepts Michel's world, nor rejects it outright. Personal and involved in an unmotivated, limited way, the framework narration maintains its own prime level of reality, without qualifying what status Michel's reality may have.

In fantastic narrative, the reader is never permitted to lose sight of the opposites of illusion and reality, at the same time denied the tools to distinguish the one from the other. Once the private worlds of characters seem to dominate, and if there is no indication in the narration of how the perspective is wrong, a tension is established which cannot be resolved. Unqualified, difference becomes negotiable. Even in Der Sandmann, where there seems to be a prime reality of common sense and rational behaviour (where people can recognize for example the inadequacies of an automaton), such reality is subverted by the ambiguous narrator discourse and focalization.

Even though fantastic narrative does not project an unambiguous prime reality, the reader still tries to assess the relationship between what he sees as story reality and the more obvious secondary reality of the protagonist. Evidence of conformity and contradiction are sought, perhaps as Doležel suggests, in terms of a graded function which will assign degrees of authenticity to various narrative motifs.[82] Such factors involve the simple concept of distance between levels of reality, and can be identified easily within the stories. Der goldene Topf is perhaps the most interesting example because it involves a character world closely fused to that of the narrator, without any overt narrative admission of that fact, except in retrospect. The hazy prime narrative reality does not facilitate the identification of the protagonist's secondary reality. Can the reader even presume that the world of Paulmann represents a prime reality? Is it not possible that the modalities of the basic world are beyond his comprehension? The narrator is clearly not objective--there is an obvious and growing identification with the protagonist, as the theme of life through poetry emerges. The account is personal, sympathetic and "involved," although there is no "motivated" involvement in the story until the conclusion. The fusion of perspectives, which makes it difficult to distinguish character speech/reaction from that of the narrator, results from this sense of involvement -- a feeling that the narrative world projected may be essentially the same as that of Anselmus. While the reader has perhaps felt the narrator's identification with the protagonist, there has been no way of recognizing any outright support of the events as actual, until the letter from Lindhorst pulls the narrator into the story, and transforms him from a mere observer into a participating character. The ostensibly omniscient point of view is shifted to a limited and participatory perspective, as the narrator becomes the direct observer of the supernatural events. Because he no longer reports what may have happened only to others, the entire story becomes more personal in retrospect--more like a first-person narrative, and consequently more open to reader doubt. The narrator clearly believes in what has happened, and reveals his own sentiments about the hero's adventures and their happy outcome. There is not doubt that the world of the supernatural exists for this narrator, who believes and accepts. What is in doubt is his very ability to see the events in an objective way, and whether this happy knowledge is not merely a delusion which parallels that of the protagonist. If the yearning for poetic fulfilment of the narrator merely reduplicates that of the protagonist (and that of Hoffmann himself), it is possible that the narrator is only a part of the fantasy, completely involved in a secondary level of reality. Were we to accept the story at this point as a Märchen, we could simply believe in the narrator's final stance. If, however, we hesitate between outright acceptance of a second ontological zone and a rational explanation, we will never be satisfied with the narrator's presumptions. The confused levels of reality will have reinforced the essential ontological hesitation of the text.

This is certainly the case in the manuscript within Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, where the narrative, although told in third-person, seems to be about the narrator, who makes no attempt whatsoever to distinguish between a prime reality and that of the protagonist. The views of the narrator and protagonist are closely merged--are inseparable, in fact--and the other characters are presented from the protagonist's point of view.

In contrast, Der Sandmann provides a more objective, distanced narration, with a point of view more distinct from that of the protagonist, with the exception of some deliberate ambiguity, especially in scenes which are focalized through Nathanael. The narrator's voice is not permeated by an implicit agreement with the perspective of the protagonist, as is sensed in Der goldene Topf. Particularly the childhood impressions of Nathanael seem less authentic when reported by the older protagonist, including the effect of narrative instance. The sense of the narrator's personal knowledge of the characters does not reduce objectivity, or serve to fuse levels of reality, because the narrator does not apparently sympathize with the protagonist's point of view. In fact, he partially assumes the perspective of Clara, with the result that Nathanael's story is re-evaluated by this character--a re-evaluation which is "fed back" into the narrative. Clearly the hesitation in this story does not depend so much on the confusion of levels of reality, since Nathanael is identifiably mad, but rather on the entirely insidious possibility of the corrosion of one ontological zone by another, which may or may not account for the protagonist's madness.

In The Nose, there seems to be little difference between the speech/reactions of the characters and narrator. While the narrator does not identify with any position, and is certainly not sympathetic to any character, his statements do not contradict what could be called a secondary level of reality. Kovaliov's opinions may not be shared by the narrator, yet relative worlds are not seen to diverge from a prime narrative reality. They are fused, since the story is after all entirely nonsensical: confusion and hesitation result not from discrepancies between levels of reality, but because the narrator is determined to create such a story. Perhaps in the final analysis The Nose is not unlike Der goldene Topf--what is real and what is imagined necessarily involves the narrator, in spite of any pretended non-participation.

In the first part of The Portrait, the third-person narrative creates a prime level of reality, since the voice of the narrator remains distinct from character doubts and mainly objective. Except in scenes focalized through the protagonist, there is no close identification with the character's views. But this changes in the first-person narrative of the second part, which becomes more subjective because of a second-hand story involvement. This narrator's voice tends to merge with those of other characters, especially that of his father. In this way, a kind of narrator "acceptance" becomes visible--an acceptance of what the reader would normally consider to be secondary levels of reality. Such technique renders the prime narrative reality more ambiguous and destabilized by mutually supporting secondary levels of reality which are not clarified or evaluated externally.

Clearly a complete integration of secondary narrative worlds into a prime narrative reality produces stability, whereas partial overlapping exacerbates reader hesitation in the evaluation of events, reinforcing the hybrid ontological structure. While this is most obvious in first-person narrative, where there is a necessary confusion between what should constitute a prime narrative world and a secondary level of reality, in all fantastic texts the suspiciously "imaginative" can only relate ambiguously to the rest of the textual reality. There is in fact less distance between levels of reality when the apparently prime narrative reality and any secondary level of reality seem to share the hesitation fully--when the narration is least decisive.

This hesitation link between the indecisive narration as such and the reader can turn stories otherwise explicable in psychological terms into the pure fantastic. We realize that fantastic texts contain ideally an ontological hesitation shared by character(s) and an implicit reader. Yet character hesitation may be very limited and not sustained throughout the text. In La Fée aux miettes, for example, Michel does experience some difficulty in integrating his strange experiences into "normal" reality, sometimes challenging the authenticity of his own account by introducing the dream complications. Yet he remains somehow in ignorance of the full implications of his experiences, perhaps seeming all the more mad as a result. Or, as in Der Sandmann, the hesitation of the protagonist may be quickly resolved, as decisions are made. But obviously, even if the character becomes convinced of supernatural influence, the fantastic does not end. The closer a protagonist comes to believing in the supernatural or to realizing madness or fantasy, the more emphatic must be the basic hesitation of the narration itself, which then results in the fundamental reader hesitation, implicit within the text and manifest in the response of real readers.

Narrative access to minds, which sometimes can be expected to clarify narrative situations, especially when provided by an authoritative narrator, serves in fantastic narrative to limit knowledge because of its restricted use, and to further destabilize the relationship between levels of reality. Because of the states of the minds exposed, mental access promotes the multiperspectivism and hesitation generated in the rest of the narration. Even if the mental access does not imply that the intrusion of events may be the result of some mental instability, revelations of reactions may be useless. Certainly in The Nose, Kovaliov's mind is of little use to himself or the reader.

One of the ways of rendering mental access more ambiguous, and consequently further strengthening the link between basic narrative hesitation and that of the reader, is found in the stylistic procedure of modalization. The use of epistemic "qualifiers"--such phrases as "it seemed," "perhaps," "I felt," etc.--change the relationship between the speaker and what he says, by removing the force of certainty from the statement and assigning it an "as if" status.[83] Suggestions are made and illusions are built. Suppositions replace assertions, or in the terms of Brooke-Rose, utterances replace statements. Statements must be declarative sentences, complete with terms of certitude. Utterances express only what is felt or perceived, and include doubt, questioning, and supposition.[84] Although Gogol avoids such modalizations, Hoffmann and Nodier do encourage supposition and certainty to struggle for dominance in narrative sentences. The first-person narratives reinforce their inherent subjectivity with expressions like "seemed to." Even though Michel largely "asserts" what has happened, he does use such expressions as _semblait_ or _on aurait dit_ to represent Belkiss' "imagined" actions in the locket. The third-person narration in _Der Sandmann_ indulges in a frequent use of "it was as if," "he felt as if," and "it seemed," which modalize sentences which are then corrected by the narrator's statement. A distance is thus created between the perceptions of the protagonist and that of the narrator. When Nathanael first looks with the spyglass, he sees Olimpia's fixed and lifeless eyes begin to take on the power of life and vision, but the narrator uses "seemed" three times in the form of _es war als_ and the verb _scheinen_. In _Der goldene Topf_, such procedures are used mainly to lend an "as if dreamt" status to experiences, without actually qualifying those experiences as dreams.

The most fascinating aspect of subjective semantics--which deserves its own detailed study in place of a few brief comments--is _focalization_. If the narrator's speech, which the reader presumes to construct a narrative world, is pervaded by the perception of a character, there results a subjectivized narrative.[85] Once the semantic features of a character's speech are incorporated into a narration, it becomes even more difficult to determine what is true within a narrative world. The "facts" are denied authentication as long as this procedure is evident. Focalization involves a shifting point of view--narrative statements absorb the attitudes or beliefs which are generated in a character's relative level of reality. Since such character perceptions may be invalid in the prime narrative reality, world stability is drastically reduced. It becomes difficult to determine how much of the narrator's authority is maintained, even in traditionally realistic texts. In fantastic narrative, the problems are even more substantial because of the basically "faulty" narrative transmission. Even a third-person discourse may not serve to authenticate or disauthenticate the character-generated perceptions.

The process of focalization creates a void, where the prime narrative reality and the secondary level(s) of reality invalidate each other. Focalization through characters, especially in terms of dreams, madness, or fantasy, can be explained away by the reader, in a process not limited by authentication. In effect, because of the exposure of a second level of reality through focalization, there results a reduction in the authenticity of the second ontological zone. One of the most striking examples is the incident at the Archivist's door, in Vigil Two of Der goldene Topf, which is told in the same matter-of-fact way as the previous supernatural events, yet what "happens" is no longer possible in either ontological zone. Anselmus cannot be crushed and cracked into pieces. This event is obviously focalized through the protagonist, as Anselmus' vision, without assigning it an "as if" status, and without narratorial comment. An even more fascinating example occurs in Der Sandmann, within the protagonist's story in the first letter. First-person narrative is not necessarily focalized through the narrator, but here an incident is told in exactly the same way as the rest of the story, yet includes such physically impossible events as the unscrewing of hands and feet and their rearrangement. This is clearly the child's assessment of the encounter with the "sandman"--the "I" of the narrator has been temporarily replaced by the "I" of the character. While character descriptions are never to be considered definitive, such obviously subjective speech casts doubts on the remainder of the protagonist's narrative.

Partial and shifting focalization in particular encourages a variable appreciation of the events by the reader, since the narrator's view becomes more clouded and indeterminate. While it is not possible to "prove" focalization, and it is not the object of this study to undertake any extensive revelations, Der Sandmann does provide excellent examples of partial focalization. In a sentence like "Dem Nathanael war es plötzlich, als meine der kalte prosaische Siegmund es sehr treu mit ihm..."[86], the narrator reveals what Nathanael suddenly felt, as a narrative fact, but leaves in place the protagonist's perception that Siegmund is cold and prosaic. The narration describes Nathanael as going mad by adopting a mixed perspective--that of Nathanael feeling ripped by scorching claws, and that of the narrator who sees the result of the destruction of the character's senses.[87] The narrator includes the statement that streams of fire flash from Nathanael's eyes as he lapses into madness on the tower--presumeably what Nathanael feels. The protagonist's feelings thus become part of the narrative fabric, yet have trouble standing alone without authentication, and in effect cannot survive as narrative facts. Once again, by exposing a separate character level of reality, the authenticity of the second ontology is undermined.

Obviously the lack of narrator "correction" is central to this effect--by refusing to comment on focalization, the narrator abandons the reader to a character's limited vision. Clarification is certainly possible. (For example, again in Der Sandmann, the frenzy of Nathanael at the table covered with eyeglasses is totally focalized through the protagonist, but then the illusion is clarified as only a product of Nathanael's mind.) A lack of clarification is absolutely crucial in The Portrait, where the main event of the "dreams" is focalized entirely through the artist, without external comment. That the world of Chartkov's perception becomes more clearly "true" as the story progresses into a second narrative is made all the more disconcerting by this initial confusion.

Lack of mutual support between levels of reality

This confusion is part of a larger narrative non-authentication of character statements, which involves the absence of correspondence between character speech/reactions and narrative statements. Support must be lent to the focalization through characters, or to the reaction of characters to story events--the sentences of characters are non-authentic unless deliberately authenticated by the narrator. While narrators in first-person narratives are unable to evaluate properly the reactions of other characters, much less their own, the reader looks to third-person narrative for textual indications of whom to believe. In fantastic narrative, deliberate authentication is withheld in favour of a partial, intermittent, or implied acceptance of events reported as being part of a prime narrative reality. Active support is replaced with non-denial.

The best examples of this pervasive non-authentication involve reports which are not qualified. In the concluding chapter of La Fée aux miettes, Daniel says of Michel's escape that "his friends" said that he flew off the top of the church towers with the singing mandrake. Michel's friends are lunatics after all--such a report demands clarification. In The Portrait, it is a character who suggests that the portrait has been "stolen." Not an authenticated statement, this remains the opinion of the audience. The reader cannot consequently "know" how the portrait has disappeared. Anything may have happened, since the narrator was very careful to point out at the beginning of the framed story that the audience was most attentive to the storyteller. In Der Sandmann, the professor categorically declares that Coppola is Coppelius, but since left without support by the narrator, this utterance does not become a narrative fact. Der goldene Topf provides almost constant examples, since what Anselmus believes is never categorically confirmed or contradicted. Is the voice which Anselmus hears summoning the snakes back to the water really that of the Archivist? Lindhorst declares his stories to be literally true, but they are laughable to the other characters, and are never confirmed by the narrator. Veronika's revelations in the eleventh vigil seem to confirm and substantiate the battle between Lindhorst and the old woman, since they are completely rational statements. But the reader is invited to understand these statements as he may wish, without external clarification.

It is then the lack of narrative correction of character statements which produces the baffling effect. Although we have seen the sporadic use of modalizing qualifiers, these methods only serve to further confuse and not to actually reject the views of characters. In Der goldene Topf, even the early introduction of the idea of a malicious fate comes from Anselmus' own character statements--his "interpretation" of the world is not corrected. The narrator in Der Sandmann however does not let Nathanael's views pass as authentic, using techniques which indicate an implicit rejection. (The repeated corrections of Nathanael's view of Clara, and the indications of the reaction of other characters to the automaton are central to this process.) In The Nose, all characters remain ludicrous in their reactions, which are as "unreal" as the events themselves--no explicit correction can alleviate the absurdity of the narrative situation.

Where the reader most expects a qualifying function to be performed by the narrator is perhaps in external framework narration, but that too is denied in La Fée aux miettes. The framework narrator neither supports nor negates Michel's story, refusing to authenticate his words. The reader is abandoned to the narration of an ostensible lunatic, without any means of verifying the facts. The minimal external reference does not serve to place the account into a more objective perspective. There is no measure of "truth." In Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht, the "editor" deliberately undermines the subsequent words of the Enthusiast, but does not provide the "correct" version of events.

A parallel enigma results because of character non-corroboration of narrative statements. While we have examined some of these aspects in terms of the non-confirmation of the existence of a supernatural domain, they are equally relevant in terms of discrepancies between levels of reality. Stories which include the supporting device of documentation in shared experience are numerous. In such tales, the experience of several observing characters supports the stance of the narrator about supernatural events.[88] There is a basic distinction between a situation in which only one character has "impossible" experiences, and one where others are involved.[89] In the former, the reader thinks ~~of~~ hallucination, dreams, madness, or some other "abnormal" behaviour; whereas in the latter, he will probably conclude that the narrative world includes such events. In other words, the narrative world is authenticated collectively by independent witnesses, so that the events do not seem to result from a purely subjective perspective. In the absence of explicit textual indications to the contrary, this kind of shared character experience is a source of comfort for the reader, no matter how shocking the events may be, or what challenge these events may prove to be to an external set of beliefs. As Maitre explains this effect, coherence criteria become those of the "possible non-actual world," so that a different possible world fully replaces the one which matches the possibilities of the real world.[90]

In fantastic texts, this specific kind of correspondence between ontological zones and character levels of reality is denied. For the most part, the narrator stands alone in his predicament of accounting for events which involve one protagonist, especially in first-person narrative, where those "persons" are co-extensive. There are notable exceptions. One is certainly the chaotic scene in Vigil Nine of Der goldene Topf, which can only be reduced in part to drunkenness. The little messenger is seen to be a parrot by all of the characters: "...und alle sahen nun wohl, daB das gravitätische Männlein eigentlich ein grauer Papagei war."[91] The Portrait provides an extensive example of documentation by shared experience, detailing the evil influence which had been felt by all who did business with the usurer, or came into contact with his portrait. The narrator isolates many details about the general dread, resultant miserable fates, and specific incidents, which correspond to the events of Chartkov's life. Even here Gogol cannot resist the temptation to have the narrator raise the possibility that some of this may have been mere "talk,"[92] but the general effect remains that of a substantiation of truly supernatural influence. By establishing an evil impact in this way, the narrator of these events confirms at least in part the incident of the "dreams" in the first narrative. The whole fate of Chartkov is seen to correspond retrospectively to the facts of the painting's history and all the "eye-witness" accounts of incidents. Chartkov has in effect borrowed money from the usurer without knowing the terms of the loan, and his fate is the same as that of all the others. An involved character even provides the description of the precise kind of portrait figure activity which the reader knows to have happened to Chartkov.[93]

It must be made clear in such an example that one character world is supported by a set of other character worlds. It is not the original narrator's stance which is supported--that position was never clear in any case. It is rather a secondary level of reality which gains corroboration through a narrative which reveals supporting evidence for previous story events. The result is that the original basic reality is destabilized in favour of a second ontological zone, where Chartkov's experiences "really" happen. As such a secondary level of reality becomes closer to prime reality, or even replaces it, the second ontological zone emerges with greater authenticity.

The specific role of characters in qualifying a protagonist's point of view is generally denied its conventional force in fantastic narrative. Protagonists tend to stand alone in their dilemmas, except for isolated instances which only serve to further confuse the reader. Certainly the disappearance of the nose is substantiated by character reactions in The Nose, but then there is also that strange acceptance of the whole affair as somehow quite possible although socially undesirable. We have discussed the effect which Clara has in Der Sandmann--a role which separates Nathanael's reality from a prime story world. Even here, however, Hoffmann includes the fear of Nathanael's mother and respect/subservience of his father, as a possible support of the protagonist's perspective. Der goldene Topf is more problematic, because of Veronika's involvement in Anselmus' experiences--it becomes more difficult to discount his adventures as only delusions. Her "knowledge" serves to confirm the way Anselmus sees events. The role of Veronika's imagination is never clear of course, although textual indicators can be found, and her experiences with the old woman are fully independent of Anselmus. What happens to Veronika always seems more real, because she belongs to the prosaic world and has no poetic aspirations. The other characters become only marginally involved in the supernatural, so that only vague suspicions are aroused, which can still be accounted for by the clever idea that madness is contagious. In the first-person narratives of both Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht and La Fée aux miettes, the protagonists are generally thought at least fanciful and strange by their fellow characters, if not actually mad. Certainly "abnormalities" do not go unnoticed, and even provoke ridicule. There are in fact no clear manifestations of the supernatural witnessed by other "natural" characters, and consequently no possible corroboration.

Chapter Five: Correlation Between the Authenticity of Hybrid Narrative Worlds and Secondary Levels of Reality

Role of thematized dualisms

The analysis of fantastic narrative usually involves a discussion of thematized dualisms as binary oppositions between two worlds. For the purpose of this study, the relationship between the authentication of ontological zones and levels of reality can be seen to involve the devices of thematized dualisms, which also serve to produce ambiguity. The basic dualities highlight the inner struggle of the human mind, and the fundamental difficulty in defining reality--they represent fantastic hesitation on a thematic level.

Fantastic tales combine diverse ways of looking at the world, from both authentic and distorted perspectives. Reality as we expect it to be is opposed by fantasy or illusion, which may be produced by hallucination, intoxication, or dreams. But the precarious equilibrium of such a duality involves not only dreams, but also day-dreams as pure fantasy, leading to a further dualism between the world of trivial, prosaic (and bourgeois) reality, and that of inspiration, poetry, and the artistic. Intoxicated vision is not only considered in opposition to real perception, but more importantly is opposed to supernatural influence and/or genuine inspiration. The normal life situation is opposed to madness, which may involve the demonic forces of evil, or occult forces of nature which can control men's lives. This invisible, demonic world impinges upon the world of material reality, producing a further dualism between good and evil. But as with dreams, apparent madness may also be opposed to a sanity which is truly subject to supernatural influences, including the benevolent. Identities are divided and set in opposition to each other, so that doubles become an integral part of the larger set of dualities.

We have seen how the fundamental opposition between reality and illusion functions on a basic interpretive level within the fantastic texts. Because of procedures of narrative transmission, the protagonists are always either victims of their own illusions within a natural world with natural laws, or they participate in events which are real in a second ontological zone, the laws of which are not recognized to be operative within natural reality. We have been able to recognize, with the help of possible-world semantics, that the reality which the reader expects on the basis of his own world view and set of beliefs is not necessarily the same as the basic story reality, which may in fact include a second ontological zone. But we have not yet determined how the uncertainty of the personal reality of characters relates specifically to that basic narrative reality--the possible discovery that illusion or delusion may be all there is.

Certainly the world of fantasy, in all its forms, is a transition device or bridge between two ontological zones. Dreams, for example, represent a different ontological zone, because in dreams, everything is possible. There are no modal restrictions belonging to the natural world, and the supernatural may be fully integrated. Madness shares these modal capabilities, so that both dreams and madness can be seen as models for the fantastic world. They represent intermediate worlds between the natural and the supernatural, which combine the modal properties of both.[94] Dreams and madness relate to the natural world, as a real aspect of human experience as it is known to occur. But they also relate to the supernatural sphere, because they include events which are not considered possible in the actual world. It is these contradictory modal features, or the combination of modal properties, which make these examples of binary opposition or thematized dualities into such convenient devices for fantastic narrative. Like fantastic texts, dreams are fragmentary, usually lacking internal coherence. As Rowe points out, they often include a distortion of normal causal relationships, without undermining the entire structure of the dream.[95] As such, they are again a model for the way in which causal connections often remain unquestioned in fantastic texts, producing the fantastic effect.

As modern readers, we presume a dichotomy between the structure of dreams or madness and that of reality. Daniel, as a representative of basic common sense in La Fée aux miettes, defines lunatics as people who do not concern themselves with the affairs of the world, and who talk about things which could never happen.[96] A madman is seen to take subjective experiences for objective truth. The use of madness/dream explanations is actually a classical trick in narrative, used to mediate between two worlds, but maintaining the prime position of the story reality. The brutal intrusion of the supernatural into ordinary life is closely linked with psychological disturbances, both in terms of thematized dualisms within the text, and because of a standard reader reaction. When dreams or madness seem to "motivate" a second ontological zone, they actually serve to disauthenticate that zone in favour of a more stable basic reality. In The Nose, for example, a dream would explain the events perfectly, as was in fact the case in the earlier version, where the story was given the name Son (A Dream), an overnight dating (instead of the March 25 to April 7 indications appearing in the 1842 version),[97] and an explicit final qualification as a dream. The later version of the story certainly remains built like the logic of dreams--absurd, confused, nonsensical--yet the reality of Petersburg and the structure of dream are mixed, without real combination, like two incompatible fluids which are shaken together but not solvent.

Mechanisms of dual reader response

Because the supernatural is generally introduced by the unreliable statements of, or focalization through characters, and is not confirmed by the narrator, the reader tends to link the description and acceptance of the supernatural to character delusion. Although the actual description of the supernatural may not be entirely based on the impressions and reactions of characters, without explicit narrator statements, the events are seen to be "experienced" by the characters. They are consequently considered dubious and suspect, in terms of a rational explanation which insinuates some kind of fantasy. The subjective impact of this fantastic technique is such that rational reader reaction is aroused in proportion to the protagonist's acceptance of the supernatural. In spite of a sympathetic character portrayal, which has its own desired consequence of reader involvement, an opposite effect occurs simultaneously. The more the non-authenticated supernatural seems acceptable and "normal" to the involved characters (including narrator/protagonists), the stronger is the reader's temptation to conclude natural causes of delusion. The more the hybrid world is understood by characters, in terms of its modal possibilities and potential for personal action, the more suspect that "understanding" is. Character reluctance to realize implications, and a genuine self-questioning of the validity of perception highlight a "normal" appreciation of reality, which may be consequently different from what the reader routinely expects. But an exhibition of an acceptance of the need to adapt to and accommodate the "reality" of supernatural incursions highlights the character's own mental functioning, which seems to share the general destabilization and dualities inherent in the text, and becomes identified with the ontological disturbance.

This premise is supported in the fantastic texts studied, where the specific narrative properties discussed, in combination with the mechanisms of narrative transmission, serve to produce this reader response, which results in what has been labelled fantastic hesitation. The relationship between the hesitation produced by the creation of hybrid ontologies and mutually-corroding levels of reality is found within the familiar thematized dualisms, which provide the necessary pretext for dual (or multiple) reader conclusions. It has always been obvious that in fantastic texts reality is impossible to distinguish from both a second ontological zone and from a character's secondary level of reality. The second ontological zone does often correspond with the perception of the protagonist, and may seem indistinguishable from a secondary reality.

What is perhaps more crucial is that as readers, we both reduplicate the rationalizing or "naturalizing" activity carried on by the protagonist, in terms of natural explanations, and simultaneously try to use our evaluation of the character's mental state to establish how the levels of story reality conform to, or contradict one another. This is after all the easy solution, because it will serve to eradicate that annoying second ontological zone. Character involvement can be seen to deny the event(s) any supernatural status, by suggesting a secondary level of reality of fantasy which allows the event(s) to be integrated into the basic story ontology. The confused perception which is a part of the character's secondary level of reality is somehow "absorbed" by the reader, who tries to equate the second ontological zone with the incorrect secondary character world. The merging of what would appear to be a second ontological zone and a secondary level of reality is then the most obvious conclusion for the reader, especially in first-person narratives, where the secondary reality "doubles" as the prime reality of the narrative, but also in the kind of ambiguous third-person narratives which we have examined.

The familiar critical activity of assigning validity or "weight" to the possible explanations, especially in terms of how well the hesitation is preserved until the end of the text (and beyond), is seen then to depend on the treatment of levels of reality. The very ambiguity of the existence of the second ontological zone relates to the character's secondary level of reality, according to how both of these aspects are exposed within the dualities thematized within the text. There is a more or less dominant tendency in the narration to disauthenticate the supernatural sphere by integrating it into a secondary level of reality, which would be strongest for example in La Fée aux miettes and Der Sandmann, becoming less pronounced in Die Abenteuer der Silvester-Nacht and Der goldene Topf. Since a protagonist cannot separate his own perception of reality from a possibly wider, more correct perspective, and his perception involves the question of textual ontological reality, the reader becomes confused on two levels. He does not know how the character's world fits into a prime narrative reality, and he cannot determine what ontology is in force in the narrative world. Quite simply, unless the narration tells the reader how to interpret the muddled portrayal of events, which we have seen to involve a wide range of mechanisms of narration, he suspects that the protagonist (whether a narrator or not) creates a secondary world which corresponds with the reader-unacceptable second ontological zone. The *exposure* of that secondary level of reality, through the same mechanisms of narrative transmission, serves to reduce directly the authenticity of the second ontological zone. Or conversely, as can be evidenced in *The Portrait*, as ontological zones become more distinct, substantiated and integrated by narrative procedure, prime and secondary levels of reality are brought closer together, so that the secondary level assumes a greater authenticity in direct correspondence with that of the second ontological zone. Authenticity of hybrid narrative worlds is a function of the exposure and treatment of secondary levels of reality.

Suggestions for further study

The reader operation which signals this correlation remains of course inadequate for any "final" understanding of fantastic narrative. To resolve would be to destroy the fundamental quality of the fantastic text--that special dislocation of reader expectations. But still, the recognition of this operation suggests that further study into the synthesis between narrative ontological zones and the secondary levels of reality could be carried out on the level of deeper psychological implications. Such study could be rooted in the considerations of the fragility of the limit between mind and matter, which Todorov finds typical of the fantastic,[98] and could not only involve considerations of thematized madness, but also that of dreams, especially within the Romantic perspective that dreams constitute a kind of valuable reality--a world of magic vision which is pertinent and possibly even merged with reality. The notion could be developed then that the *perception* of the supernatural is as important in narrative as its actual existence; and by extension, that the ability to describe that perception, or to create that particular possible world, is as valid as any "real" narrative manifestation. By focusing on the fantastic notion of equal reality of all perceptions within a narrative multiperspectivism, it might be possible to concede that even delusion can have a narrative reality beyond that of a secondary character world. If we wrote a story about the second world war, in which South Seas natives perceived the arrival of modern aircraft as a supernatural event, is it not possible that those airplanes could be both natural phenomena and gods within that narrative world? If we could manage to tell the story without any external perspective provided by modern science, the semantics designating the reality of the airplanes could create any narrative manifestations, all of which could have equal validity.

The Romantics taught us an appreciation for the unintelligible, the need for incessant revision of thought, and the idea that certainties are only ephemeral after all. We realize more and more that truth can only be fragmentary. How can we impose upon fiction a rigid modal logic which cannot account for the contradictions which are perfectly possible within a narrative world? How can we expect the operations of standard rational logic to regulate the worlds of fiction, when in fact it is quite possible that all constants really are variable? Science is coming to realize the limitations which our restricted environment has placed on learning. Perhaps even established formulae of physics will one day be seen to have been valid only within a limited earth framework or set of conditions--to have been only possible worlds without absolute truth. The application of possible-world semantics to literary study must now evolve, to develop a more radically open logic of the imagination, which might still not account more accurately for the perplexity of fantastic narrative, but could perhaps explore postmodern narrative, where words themselves have an autonomy far beyond the purely representational.

It has been the purpose of this text-oriented study to apply a particular theoretical perspective to selected Romantic fantastic tales, not only to develop an enhanced awareness of several specific authors and their narrative techniques, but also to further explore the fantastic genre within this heuristic theoretical framework. While such a restricted theoretical approach cannot account systematically for the socio-historical context, and only partially for the important role of literary convention, it has provided valuable insight into the narrative procedures of the Romantic fantastic tale. Through a detailed correlation between the ontology of the narrative world and the mechanisms of narration, it has been possible to understand real reader hesitation as to the ontological status of story events as a direct result of indecisive narration involving deficient epistemological procedures. By concentrating on what is specific to Romantic fantastic narration--especially in terms of the narrative strategies which simultaneously create world structures and undermine the reader's understanding of them--it has furthermore been possible to see the theory of possible-world semantics in action, applied to "difficult" narrative situations. But in order to effectively "test" the theory, the study had necessarily to restrict the historical aspect, and concentrate instead on intrinsic content, which is correlated with the forms of expression.

Certainly a new theory which has only recently been put into practice by a few scholars cannot be expected to accommodate all critical considerations. I have used it to identify common denominators within Romantic fantastic narrative. Historic generic considerations would be crucial for a further study, of possible constraints on the application of possible-world semantics to narrative. Another aspect which deserves further study involves the concept of an implied author. This more "rhetorical" type of criticism could accommodate both the role of the author as a masked speaker within the text, and the range of meta-narrative comments which need not or cannot be attributed to the narrator as such.

Within the parameters of this particular study, it has been impossible to include any of the voluminous recent critical work on the fantastic genre, although the ramifications of some of these studies are reflected in my conclusions. Since such criticism has in fact involved a definition of the fantastic beyond that of Todorov, the claim can be made that either the definition of the fantastic provided by Todorov is too exclusive, or that certain tales should be classified within other genres. In either case, the specific focus of this study on the fundamental causes of fantastic hesitation rules out any investigation here as to inter-generic considerations. To discuss Der goldene Topf or La Fée aux miettes as artistic fairy tales (Kunstmärchen) would not involve the hesitation under discussion. Likewise, considerations of folklore, which are very important in The Portrait, are not pertinent to this study. The Nose is not really a fantastic tale in the exact sense in which the other stories are, projecting a world which is more like the kind of radically hybrid world world found in some of Kafka'a works. This study, however, has juxtaposed a variety of tales which can be broadly labelled as "fantastic," in order to demonstrate the application of a set of theoretical principles, and to expose common narrative qualities which are genuinely in these stories.

Finally, further study could involve a comparison between the nature of certain Romantic fantastic tales and the narrative structure of postmodern texts, on the basis of the correlations which have been established in this study. The ontological plurality and hesitation of postmodern narrative, as well as its stress on textuality and metafictionality, could be exposed as already central to the Romantic fantastic tale, in particular to those of Hoffmann. Likewise, the strategies of postmodern narrative, seen in terms of the methods of narrative world construction, are not unlike those of the fantastic genre. In both cases, the possible narrative world structures are fundamentally complicated by procedures of narrative transmission, which serve not only to obstruct the reader's recovery of textual meaning, but to reinforce a sense of discontinuity between fictional "reality" and any actual world.

Notes

[1] Lubomír Doležel, "Narrative Worlds," *Sound, Sign and Meaning. Quinquagenary of the Prague Linguistic Circle*, ed. Ladislav Matejka (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Contributions, No. 6, 1976) 546.

[2] Lubomír Doležel, "Intensional Function, Invisible Worlds, and Franz Kafka," *Style* 17.2 (Spring 1983): 135.

[3] Lubomír Doležel, "Towards a Typology of Fictional Worlds," *Tamkang Review* 14 (1984/85): 263.

[4] Lubomír Doležel, "Extensional and Intensional Narrative Worlds," *Poetics* 8.1/2 (April 1979): 196.

[5] Doležel, *Poetics* 195-6.

[6] Doležel, *Sound, Sign and Meaning* 543.

[7] Lubomír Doležel, "Narrative Modalities," *Journal of Literary Semantics* 1 (April 1976): 6.

[8] Doležel, *Sound, Sign and Meaning* 544.

[9] Doležel, *Sound, Sign and Meaning* 547.

[10] Joseph Margolis, "The Logic and Structure of Fictional Narrative," *Philosophy and Literature* 7.2 (October 1983): 163.

[11] Thomas G. Pavel, *Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1986) 90.

[12] Pavel 49.

[13] Doreen Maitre, *Literature and Possible Worlds* (London: Middlesex Polytechnic Press, 1983) 14.

[14] Maitre 29-30.

[15] Doležel, *Tamkang Review* 267.

[16] Doležel, *Sound, Sign and Meaning* 546-8.

[17] Doležel, *Tamkang Review* 267.

[18] Maitre 96-7.

[19] Maitre 15.

[20] Marie-Laure Ryan, "The Modal Structure of Narrative Universes," *Poetics Today* 6.4 (1985): 734.

[21] Ryan 720.

[22] Ryan 720.

[23] For a discussion of this process as allegorical reading, see Pavel, 59-50.

[24] Ryan 721.

[25] Ryan 722-30.

[26] For a discussion of the representation of "private" worlds, see Ryan, 723.

[27] Doležel, *Style* 125-6.

[28] Félix Martínez-Bonati, "Towards a Formal Ontology of Fictional Worlds," *Philosophy and Literature* 7.2 (October 1983): 192.

[29] David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15.1 (1978): 37-46.

[30] Maitre 72.

[31] Maitre 37.

[32] Maitre 80.

[33] Martínez-Bonati 187-8.

[34] Maitre 80.

[35] Pavel 47.

[36] Martínez-Bonati 185.

[37] Martínez-Bonati 188.

[38] Doležel, *Tamkang Review* 268.

[39] Lubomír Doležel, "Truth and Authenticity in Narrative," *Poetics Today* 1.3 (Spring 1980): 10.

[40] Doležel, Poetics Today 12-13.

[41] John Woods, The Logic of Fiction: A Philosophical Sounding of Deviant Logic (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1974) 60.

[42] Doležel, Poetics 204.

[43] Doležel, Poetics Today 14-15.

[44] Ryan 751-2.

[45] Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1980) 248. Genette's terms are employed in this discussion.

[46] Nikolai Gogol, The Collected Tales and Plays of Nikolai Gogol, trans. Constance Garnett, rev. by ed., ed. Leonard J. Kent (New York: Modern Library, 1964) 587. Reference is to The Overcoat, concerning the possible heir to Akaky's "fortune."

[47] Gogol 578.

[48] E.T.A. Hoffmann, Fantasie- und Nachtstücke: Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier, Nachtstücke, Seltsame Leiden eines Theater-Direktors (München: Winkler-Verlag, 1960) 363.

[49] Nicholas Wolterstorff, Works and Worlds of Art (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 182-3.

[50] Charles E. Passage, The Russian Hoffmannists (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1963) 169.

[51] Gogol 495.

[52] Amaryll Beatrice Chanady, "Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy," diss., University of Alberta, 1982, 179.

[53] Martínez-Bonati 185-6.

[54] Doležel, Poetics Today 22.

[55] Gogol 561.

[56] Passage 170.

[57] Maitre 36.

[58] Charles Nodier, La Fée aux miettes (Paris: José Corti, 1947) 11.

[59] Nodier 20, 171, 173.

[60] Doležel, Poetics Today 22.

[61] Doležel, Poetics Today 22.

[62] Doležel, Tamkang Review 269.

[63] Wolterstorff, Works and Worlds of Art 116.

[64] Christine Brooke-Rose, A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of the Fantastic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 229.

[65] Chanady 180.

[66] Doležel, Sound, Sign and Meaning 549.

[67] Doležel, Poetics Today 21-3.

[68] Doležel, Sound, Sign and Meaning 546.

[69] Doležel, Journal of Literary Semantics 9-10.

[70] Hoffmann 197-8.

[71] Gogol 479.

[72] Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973) 104-5.

[73] Janko Lavrin, Gogol (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1925) 98-105.

[74] Passage 171-2.

[75] Martínez-Bonati 193.

[76] Lubomír Doležel, "Le triangle du double: Un champ thématique,"

trans. Hélène Boiziau and Claude Bremond, *Poétique* 64 (1985): 464-7. Doležel distinguishes the kind of "double" theme (which will be analysed in this study) from those of re-incarnation in multiple fictional worlds, and the traditional *Doppelgänger* theme, which do not appear in the stories now under discussion.

[77] Doležel, *Poétique* 464.

[78] These aspects are discussed briefly by Doležel in *Poétique* (468-9), by Georges Nivat in his introduction to *Le Nez. Le Manteau*, and by Passage (166) as a bitter parody of Hoffmann reduced to the absurd. Gogol's relationship to the contemporary "nosological" literature, and to Laurence Stern in particular, could be mentioned here.

[79] Pavel 46.

[80] Ryan 723.

[81] Doležel, *Poetics Today* 14-15, as introduced in Chapter One of this study, page twenty-seven.

[82] Doležel, *Poetics Today* 15.

[83] Todorov 38.

[84] Brooke-Rose 209-11.

[85] Doležel, *Poetics Today* 16.

[86] Hoffmann 357.

[87] Hoffmann 359. "Da packte ihn der Wahnsinn mit glühenden Krallen und fuhr in sein Inneres hinein Sinn und Gedanken zerreißend."

[88] Doležel, *Sound, Sign and Meaning* 548, with reference to Gogol's story *Viy*.

[89] Maitre 55.

[90] Maitre 100.

[91] Hoffmann 237.

[92] Gogol 548.

[93] Gogol 557.

[94] Doležel, Sound, Sign and Meaning 547.

[95] William Woodin Rowe, Through Gogol's Looking Glass: Reverse Vision, False Focus, and Precarious Logic (New York: New York University Press, 1976) 193.

[96] Nodier 17.

[97] Even this could be a trick, because of the difference between the "old" and "new" calendars used in Russia.

[98] Todorov 120. Todorov explores in some detail the fundamental themes of vision, involving the special causality of pan-determinism, the multiplication of personality, the collapse of limit between subject and object, and the transformation of time and space.

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---. "Kafka's Fictional World." Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 11.1 (March 1984): 61-83.

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